

# RELIGION AMONG AMERICAN MEN

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Religion among  
American men

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## RELIGION AMONG AMERICAN MEN

FINAL REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
THE WAR AND THE RELIGIOUS  
OUTLOOK

RELIGION AMONG AMERICAN MEN. (Ready.)

THE MISSIONARY OUTLOOK IN THE LIGHT OF THE WAR. (In  
press.)

THE CHURCH AND INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

THE TEACHING WORK OF THE CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF THE  
PRESENT SITUATION.

THE EFFECT OF THE WAR ON THE LOCAL CHURCH.

PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN UNITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE WAR.

# RELIGION AMONG AMERICAN MEN

As Revealed by a Study of  
Conditions in the Army

THE COMMITTEE ON THE WAR  
AND THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

ASSOCIATION PRESS  
NEW YORK: 347 MADISON AVENUE  
1920

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## EDITORIAL PREFACE

### *I. The Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook and Its Work.*

This volume is one of a series of studies that is being brought out by the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook. The Committee was constituted, while the war was still in progress, by the joint action of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and the General War-Time Commission of the Churches and was an expression of the conviction that the war had laid upon the Churches the duty of the most thorough self-examination. The Committee consisted of a small group of representative men and women of the various Protestant Churches appointed "to consider the state of religion as revealed or affected by the war, with special reference to the duty and opportunity of the churches, and to prepare these findings for submission to the churches." While created through the initiative of the Federal Council and the General War-Time Commission, it was given entire freedom to act according to its own judgment and was empowered to add to its number.

The Committee was originally organized with President Henry Churchill King as its Chairman and Professor William Adams Brown as Vice-Chairman. On account of prolonged absence in Europe, President King was compelled to resign the chairmanship in the spring of 1919 and Professor Brown became the Chairman of the group, with President King and Rev. Charles W. Gilkey as Vice-Chairmen. Rev. Samuel McCrea Cavert was chosen to serve as Secretary of the Committee and Rev. Angus Dun as Associate Secretary.

When the Committee began its work, four main lines of inquiry suggested themselves as of chief importance:

1. What effect has the war had upon the personal religious experience? How far has it reinforced, how far altered, the existing type of religious life and thought?

2. What effect has the war had upon the organized Christian Church? What changes, if any, are called for in its spirit and activities?

3. What effect has the war had upon Christian teaching? What changes, if any, are called for in its content or method?

4. What effect has the war had upon the duty of the Church with reference to social problems of the time? What reconstructions are needed to make our social order more Christian?

As the Committee proceeded with these inquiries, several distinct fields of investigation emerged and led the Committee to adopt the plan of bringing out a group of reports instead of a single volume. The present study, the first in a series of final reports, deals with the lessons that we feel have been learned from a study of religion in the army. Other forthcoming reports are to deal successively with the Missionary Outlook in the Light of the War, the Teaching Work of the Church in the Light of the Present Situation, the Church and Industrial Reconstruction, the Effect of the War on the Local Church, and Principles of Christian Unity in the Light of the War.

Earlier preliminary publications of the Committee consisted of a comprehensive bibliography on the War and Religion, and a series of pamphlets under the general heading "The Religious Outlook," in which the following numbers have thus far appeared:

"The War and the Religious Outlook," by Dr. Robert E. Speer.

"Christian Principles Essential to a New World Order," by President W. H. P. Faunce.

"The Church's Message to the Nation," by Professor Harry Emerson Fosdick.

"Christian Principles and Industrial Reconstruction," by Bishop Francis J. McConnell.

"The Church and Religious Education," by President William Douglas Mackenzie.

"The New Home Mission of the Church," by Dr. William P. Shriver.

"Christian Aspects of Economic Reconstruction," by Professor Herbert N. Shenton.

"The War and the Woman Point of View," by Rhoda E. McCulloch.

Other numbers in the series of pamphlets are also under consideration.

Our special thanks are due to Association Press, which has assumed responsibility for issuing the publications of the Committee.

## *II. The Present Volume.*

The data on which this report is based have been gleaned from many sources, of which the most important are the following:

1. Replies received from approximately one hundred chaplains, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, and officers or privates in the army, to a questionnaire prepared and distributed by the Committee. These replies are based on observation of and contact with thousands of men.

2. Extensive interviews conducted in the American Expeditionary Forces by Rev. James I. Vance, Rev. Andrew M. Brodie, and Rev. Herbert A. Jump, under the general supervision of President Henry

Churchill King during the time when he was Religious Work Director of the Y. M. C. A. overseas.

3. Personal conferences with chaplains, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, and others, at the office of the Committee.

4. A large number of letters received by war commissions and individuals from chaplains or soldiers in the service. Particular mention should be made of the War Commission of the Episcopal Church, which placed at the disposal of the Committee its extensive correspondence with Episcopalian chaplains on the subject of the effect of the war on religion.

5. Articles in the religious press by chaplains and others dealing with the religious situation in the army or the effect of the army experience on religious life.

6. The personal experience of members of the Committee and its secretaries.

When quotations embodied in this volume are from confidential replies to our questionnaire or from personal interviews, the source of the quotation is not indicated although the statements appear in quotation marks. When the quotation is from printed publications the source is generally indicated in a footnote. If anyone is interested in pursuing the study further, extensive annotated reading lists on various phases of the subject will be found in the bibliography on the War and Religion, issued by the Committee.<sup>1</sup>

In this report there are many references to studies made by English chaplains, individually or collectively, concerning religion in the British army. It has been the general policy of this Committee, however, not to use

<sup>1</sup> "The War and Religion: A Preliminary Bibliography of Material in English Prior to January 1, 1919," compiled by Marion J. Bradshaw for the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook. Association Press, 1919. 136 pages. \$1.50.



this British material as a source for our conclusions. Quotations from it are generally placed in footnotes and are given for purposes of comparison rather than as evidence for our own point of view. It should be stated that the report entitled "The Army and Religion," prepared by a British interdenominational committee convened by Professor David S. Cairns and the Bishop of Winchester, did not come to our hands until after our own report, with the exception of the last chapter, was in press.

It was originally intended that this investigation should deal with the navy as well as the army, but the data secured concerning the situation in the navy were insufficient to make generalization possible. So far, however, as information concerning the navy was received, it did not seem to reflect a situation very different from that found in the army.

It should also be understood that this report is based on inquiries made by Protestants among Protestants and that its conclusions, therefore, ought not to be assumed as necessarily valid in the case of Roman Catholics.

The Committee is grateful to hundreds of chaplains, Y. M. C. A. secretaries, and officers and privates in the army, without whose interest and assistance it would have been impossible to prepare this report. We are particularly indebted, however, to the Rev. Professor Henry B. Washburn, Executive Secretary of the War Commission of the Episcopal Church, who accepted the responsibility of serving as chairman of a group which gave detailed criticism to the report. Among others whose cooperation in this way has also been of great assistance should be mentioned other members of the Committee, particularly Professor Henry B. Wright, and the following, who, though not members of the Committee, have been consulted in the preparation of the volume: Chaplain John T. Axton, President Clarence A. Barbour, Right Rev. Charles H. Brent, Chaplain A. M. Brodie,

Rev. W. Stuart Cramer, Rev. Major Ralph H. Ferris, Col. Henry W. Hodge, Rev. Herbert A. Jump, Rev. Paul D. Moody, Rev. James M. Philputt, Chaplain Herbert Shipman, Rev. J. A. O. Stub, Chaplain John M. Thomas, Rev. Gaylord S. White. The interviews conducted by Dr. Brodie, Dr. Jump, and Dr. Vance overseas have added much to the concreteness of our study.

The greater part of the manuscript of the report was drafted by Rev. Angus Dun, Associate Secretary of the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook for several months. His service in weighing the evidence and formulating conclusions has been invaluable.

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## FOREWORD

It is always easier to theorize than it is to master all the facts in a situation, and to speculate on what we would like to think than to look the facts squarely in the face. It is harder still to make the correct deductions from evidence in hand. Such an experience as the war, the greatest testing period for ideals and ideas since the beginning of the Christian era, crowded into a few brief years a complete challenging of generations of convictions and beliefs. Such a time is bound to leave an aftermath of change and ruins of non-material things as great in their way as the ruins of the Cloth Hall at Ypres, or the great cathedral of Rheims. As we review some of the turning points of history, it seems as if the past five years had seen reversals or counterparts of those events packed into the narrow limits of a few short months. The Crusades, the fall of Constantinople, and the discovery of America, all these were epoch making. But Crusaders again have marched across the fields of Palestine, albeit this time in khaki, not in armor. Islam is to be no longer a power in Europe, having fallen as completely as Constantinople fell in 1453. And America has, as it were, rediscovered Europe, and having entered into some of Europe's problems finds the path back to her own former simpler insularity difficult, if not impossible. And all this has taken place to the dull accompaniment of the guns that were never silent, while in a ceaseless procession the best and bravest of every land marched in unbroken file up to the altar of sacrifice.

In the midst of all this how fared it with the faith of our fathers? Among these tottering heritages of the past there moved men of faith, often in daily contact with men

of no faith. How fared they? What did they think and what did they find? As the dust of conflict settles, men will be more and more likely to attempt records of the experiences and impressions of those days. The most vocal will not always be the most clear-sighted and the ability to say things well must not be confused with the ability to see things clearly and see them whole. The lapse of time will have made it far more difficult to record the experiences of those days than is realized now. Men will honestly believe that what they record themselves as having felt they really did feel at the time, and will lose sight of the fact that in this, as in so many other things, memory is colored by subsequent development or affected by the lens of time. The finer edge of vivid impression will have worn away. They will have read what others have said. And in these reports by others there will be British material, so that we shall be in danger of confusing our impressions of the war with the English. We may never know what it meant to them, for we had but brief months as against their years. It is also true that we are unconsciously influenced by what the world expects us to say about that which we underwent and our testimony becomes increasingly less valuable.

The report which constitutes these pages is the fusing as far as it is possible of the impressions caught fresh, the red-hot convictions, expressed before the uniform was laid aside, of men who had walked often hand in hand with death and for the first time in their lives looked daily and unafraid into the stern face of danger. What is recorded here is not the impression of any one mind, but the composite of many minds. Composites are rarely as satisfactory as we wish. Like the photographs made from many negatives, they lack in sharpness of outline what they make up in their contribution to the conception of a type. It is easier to generalize if we are not hampered by too much accurate information on the subject or by testimony which seems to be con-

flicting. And what has been done in gathering the impressions found recorded here will safeguard us in years to come from honest but misguided statements of the case for religion in the midst of war, or against it.

There is one generalization, in particular, which the evidence in hand makes it necessary to record—the widespread ignorance on elementary religious matters even of those who professed to be Church members. Perhaps the one exception was among the Roman Catholics. Such a condition as revealed constitutes a grave indictment against the Churches. They have not been true to their teaching commission. It certainly calls for a careful revision of the pulpit message. Christian instruction is our first duty, and on its success depends the effectiveness of exhortation.

It has been offered as an objection to this report that it is too gloomy, too pessimistic in tone, offering too little encouragement, and that it may be misleading and thus defeat its object. To this two things may be said.

First, the value of such a report lies in its fidelity and honesty. It has not been tampered with nor colored. To the extent that it is true that it sounds pessimistic, it is a valid judgment on much present-day preaching and teaching of religion. We are worse than fools if we are to learn nothing from the war, and if men did not find their faith all we have a right to expect faith to be when shells are exploding and men dying by the thousands, we need not so much examine our faith itself as the form in which we have been expressing it and teaching it.

And, second, this pessimism is more apparent than real. War throws everything out of joint. Many pray who did not pray before. How many continue to pray after the danger has passed we do not know, or with how many it will become a settled habit of life. On the other hand, there are many who, puzzled and wearied by war, cease to pray, at any rate with the regularity and system they once knew. But most, if not all, of these probably return

to a normal life in time. But, after all, when men ceased to pray it was for the most part because prayer had become more or less an external act in their lives and not a source of inward enlightenment and strength, an ornament unsuspectedly obsolete. The deterioration in men is always more apt to manifest itself than the improvement and the man who drops prayer from his life is more likely to be remarked than the man who is silently erecting an altar in the secret places of his heart. Men swear out loud but for the most part they pray in secret—pray best, at any rate.

St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the fire would try every man's work. While this is not the judgment of which St. Paul wrote, this war has tried men's work in the same way and the things which are overthrown seem for the time to be more conspicuous than the things that are being erected, for the process of rearing is slower than the processes of demolition. But some of the things that have gone have gone to make way for a better day.

It is not with pessimism but with hope that we turn from this work of careful sifting and compiling that has been accomplished by the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook. It gives us a deepened conviction of the fundamental religiousness of man, and therefore brings to us a new vision of the supreme importance of the Church's task and of its present opportunity.

CHARLES H. BRENT,

PAUL D. MOODY,

Headquarters Chaplains,  
American Expeditionary Forces.



## INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

When men in large numbers began to pass from home life and civil occupations into the army the first impression of the Churches was that they had something to "do." War commissions and parish committees, service flags and comfort kits, camp pastors and commissioned chaplains and the remarkable development of the Y. M. C. A. and similar agencies were the outcome of this conviction. But at the same time there has been a steady, if less widespread, idea that in the army the Churches have also something to "learn."

For the past year the religious press, and to some extent the secular press, have been carrying articles dealing with that something which the Churches might learn. But there has been the most astonishing difference of opinion as to what this "something" is. One holds that the "old Gospel" in the old language has a universal appeal—another, that we need a new language if not a new Gospel. It is argued that the Churches have failed—and, on the contrary, that men generally are filled with a Christian outlook and a Christian motive. Some point out that the war is teaching men the meaning of Christianity and revealing to them the realities of religion. Others insist that it is brutalizing them and making irresponsible children out of vigorous and independent men. The debate has given voice to hope and to despair, strong assertion and extravagant denial. Much of what has been said any intelligent pastor out of his own experience can reject at sight. Some things no man nor group of men can affirm or deny with confidence. But through it all there runs the conviction that from the army the Church has something to learn.

The chief reason for the conviction that there are les-

sons which the Church may learn from the army lies in the fact that the soldier was the average man. "Before the war Tommy was called the man in the street" is the British way of expressing it.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the soldier was somewhat above the average physically. But in his views and attitudes and habits and motives he was surely typical. Within certain limits which had very little to do with his moral or religious situation, he was chosen by lot from a generation. And, as a result, what was gathered together was a fair cross section of American male humanity.

Furthermore the minister in service had an opportunity to know the average man, especially the unchurched, such as few ministers at home have had. There is nothing especially cloistered about the life of a minister, but, as a matter of fact, birds of a feather do flock together. Men of Christian convictions and Christian affiliations do tend to congregate. And of necessity the pastor has to confine himself very largely to his own "charge." He meets the "man in the street" in church occasionally, occasionally at home—if he calls in the evening. He meets him but he does not live with him. He rarely sees him at work or at play. In the army the minister in service slept with him, ate with him, saw him at work and saw him in his club. "The chaplain had an opportunity such as almost no home minister can have of knowing the ordinary man and seeing with his eyes."<sup>2</sup> "Life in an army cantonment gave a unique opportunity to study the religious interests of the nation's men."<sup>3</sup> The Churches at home want to know what the minister in service found.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Gray, "As Tommy Sees Us."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Edwin A. McAlpin, Jr., in *The Presbyterian Advance*.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the Report on Chaplains' Replies to the Lord Bishop of Kensington. "It is felt by the Committee that the chaplains of the Navy and Army have special opportunities for observing the nature and character of the Church's influence on a large and important section of Church members, and are therefore in a position to supply valuable aid and counsel to the Committee in bringing to light our defects and failures, and indicating lines of improvement and reform."

## MOTIVES OF THE STUDY

Of course the importance of the Churches' knowing the average man is not due to his being an authority on religion. At times it has seemed as if those who wrote about him thought they had discovered a new source of revelation. This report is not based on any such idea, although we recognize, of course, that to not a few individual soldiers the experiences of war may have brought personal revelations. For revelation we go to the Man of God and to men of God. We go to the soldier for self-knowledge and a better understanding of our task. In the first place, he is the product of the last twenty-five years of secular and religious training. His roots go deeper than that, but his training has taken place in that period. His beliefs and character, his moral and religious habits, pass judgment on the religious education and training of the years just past. In war "the world must live on its religious capital as on its economic capital; and the outcome will test the solvency of the past decade."<sup>5</sup>

In the second place, the soldier is typical of the men the Churches are trying to reach. "What he thinks about the state, about social questions, about education, about religion and the Church, is what young men generally think. His interests and enthusiasms are just those of the coming generation. Where he is wrong, the nation is wrong. To whatever extent he is morally sound, to that extent it is well with us as a people."<sup>6</sup> His mind is the mind we have to interest, his will is the will we have to win. His virtues are what we have to build upon, his sins what we have to overcome.

It is important to know men as they came into the army. It is also important to know them as they came out, in so far as they were different. The experiences of military training and war, even the less intense ones, are so apart from normal life and so mingled with emo-

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<sup>5</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," *Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>6</sup> A. H. Gray, "As Tommy Sees Us."

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tion that they must stand out in the memories of men for years to come. They will be the stuff for men's thinking as well as for their story telling. They will be a point of contact and a point of reference for all who would reach their minds and hearts.

#### DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF STUDY

One of the most common complaints about reports on the religious and moral situation in the army is that they are so conflicting. To some extent this is of course due to faulty observation and faulty reporting. Men find it very difficult to keep their own expectations and hopes out of their judgments. And every man attracts to himself evidence for his own viewpoint. The evangelical, the cynic, the sacramentarian, each finds his comrades responding to him. One must know the man to weigh his evidence.

But the difficulties are much deeper than this. It is not alone the reports that are conflicting. It is the facts themselves. And there is every reason why that should be so. The 4,000,000 men who trained and served in the army did not have identical experiences by any means. Some 1,914,000 never got beyond the American training camps; 696,000 reached the back areas, the S. O. S., in France; 1,390,000 served for longer or shorter periods in advanced areas. The conditions were obviously very different in these three areas. And the same man was not the same man under varying conditions. There were the exciting days before embarkation, the restful or painful days in hospital, the days after the armistice filled with impatience and complaint, perhaps with excess. The whole atmosphere changed, and we have seen how greatly men are affected by the atmosphere around them. Officers differed from privates. Maine farmers differed from East Side immigrants. Boston Irish differed from southern Negroes. Kansas "drys" differed from New England "wets." "Different individuals would see the

same thing in different lights. The same individual would find quite different conditions in different localities."

For every comprehensive statement there are so many qualifications to be added that one is often tempted to despair of all generalization. But it is for trustworthy generalizations that we must try, since it is only in broad outlines that we can see our problem whole.

### PLAN OF STUDY

The subject of religion in the army falls quite naturally into two general divisions: (I) the state of religion as revealed in the army and (II) the effect of military training and war on religion. A very large proportion of the moral or religious facts evident in the army were but the revealing or magnifying of the situation in civil life. Men came into the army with certain ideas and attitudes and habits. The army gave them publicity. The effect of military training and war on religion is a distinct subject, much more difficult and uncertain. Of course there are many cases where it is almost impossible to distinguish between the religious and moral life carried into the war and the effects of the war in modifying that life, but in general the two divisions hold and are important.

A brief third section will consider certain lessons for the Church suggested by the results of these investigations.





PART I

THE STATE OF RELIGION AS  
REVEALED IN THE ARMY



## CHAPTER I

### THE MEN AND CHRISTIANITY

The great majority of men in the army were nominal Christians. A large proportion had some slight church connection. The number of active, conscious Christians or church members was relatively small. The number of avowed unbelievers, atheists, and agnostics was almost nil. This is the general opinion that comes with great unanimity from chaplains and other religious workers.

#### THE PROPORTION OF CHRISTIANS

The great majority of men were nominal Christians, at least to the extent that they would express some church preference when asked to do so. In July and August, 1918, a religious census was taken at Camp Devens, Mass., through the cooperation of the Y. M. C. A., the camp pastors and the military authorities. It covered 25,607 men. Of this number only 586 failed to express some church preference—approximately two per cent of the whole number. In a religious census of 1,487 men in the base hospital at a southern camp, only sixteen expressed no preference.

Such figures as those secured in a religious census in the army do not have much value in estimating definite church connection. In any census conducted in part by military authority there is a considerable amount of rather forced and artificial selection. Church preference often meant no more than that the man's mother was of such and such affiliation and that he would prefer to be married or buried by such and such a minister. But the mere expression of some preference by the great majority

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of men indicates a very general acceptance of a nominal Christian affiliation. And the testimony of chaplains<sup>7</sup> confirms this judgment:

"Almost every man claimed membership in some church, often mere preference."

"A very large percentage have some connection with the Church and feel that they belong to it. I would place it as high as 90 per cent."

"I was assigned to the Seventeenth Infantry, and in making a religious census of the organization I discovered that the great majority held to some faith, either Catholic or Protestant."

"A majority of my men were nominal Christians and claimed some church connection."

"Most men were nominal Christians and did claim some church connection."

When we turn to the question of definite church connection in the form of baptism, profession of faith or confirmation, there are no accurate figures available. Various estimates are made but it is almost impossible to weigh or compare them because the extent of church connection upon which the judgments are based is unknown. When one chaplain says "Almost 85 per cent are members of some Church" and another that "about 30 per cent were members of some recognized Church," it is clear that they are not dealing with the same thing. In general it is fair to say that chaplains believe a large proportion of men have some slight church connection. Many have been baptized, many have attended Church or Sunday school as children, many have joined the Church in youth. There would be considerable agreement on such statements as these:

"I find that nearly all the men in this Base Hospital had some kind of training in the Christian religion."

"The men have been almost invariably under religious influence of some sort in childhood."

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<sup>7</sup> "Chaplains" will be loosely used throughout this report to include not only commissioned chaplains but also camp pastors and secretaries of the Y. M. C. A.

Nominal Christians and nominal church members are numerous, but real Christians and active church members are few. By Christians in this report we do not mean saints; we mean men largely motivated by loyalty to Christ and His teachings.<sup>8</sup> By active church members we do not mean "ecclesiastical laymen," we mean men with a definite loyalty to some branch of the great Christian community, who feel responsible for its life and are nurtured by its ministrations. That such men are a small minority is the clear testimony.

"Few are genuine churchmen." "A small number were faithful; a larger number irregular and the majority indifferent."

"The Churches ought to recognize that they have never gained the interest and enthusiasm of eight out of ten of the generation just coming to maturity. As far as vital motivations go, these fellows are not Christians at all, but merely more or less decent young pagans."<sup>9</sup>

"Probably 15 per cent would be near to the number of men who previous to entering the service had a vital religious connection." "Perhaps 15 per cent were vital Christians." "The real Christian soldiers were as few as the harvest was great in every instance. I speak of the masses of young men over whom I had spiritual oversight and not of the faithful few who can always be found anywhere."

The figures quoted by these correspondents are not significant except as attempts to visualize the situation. They do not pretend to be statistical, but they do give an impression.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The question as to the extent to which we should expect men to be *consciously* Christian might well be raised, both here and elsewhere in this report. A member of the Committee has raised the query "whether we are not looking too much to the conscious, too little to the subconscious, attitudes of our men; and whether there is not something quite normal in the main phenomenon which impresses us in these studies—the comparative faintness of the conscious religious attachments and professions on the part of many men."

<sup>9</sup> B. I. Bell, "The Church and the Civilian Young Man," *Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that the same impression is shared by three of the most widely read British chaplains. T. W. Pym in "Papers from Picardy" writes: "Christian believers are of course the smallest class numerically; it is always amazing that any one can succeed in persuading himself that English men and women who believe in Jesus as their Saviour and try to follow Him are in anything but a minority." Norman MacLean in "God and the Soldier" says: "It would be idle to pretend that the majority of our

Whether these reports summon up the picture of a great overgrown body with a spark of life at its center or that of a little leaven slowly leavening the whole lump will depend on a man's faith. Whether they are surprising or not will depend on a man's expectations. The conditions are, of course, but the projection of the situation in civilian life.

A recent writer in the religious press reports on his own confirmation of this situation :

"Some people may think that these unpleasant facts fit some other church, but as far as their own church is concerned they are satisfied by the number of names that it has on its Honor Roll. A study of the Honor Roll of a number of churches shows that many of the men whose names are enrolled there are really out of touch with the Church. Most pastors have placed the name of every man that has left his parish for service, in either the army or navy, on the Honor Roll of the Church. If a family calls on a minister to conduct their funeral services or to perform their marriage ceremonies they are naturally considered a part of that parish. When their boy has been called to the colors they like to know that his name is on the Honor Roll of the Church. The Churches have recognized this desire and gladly placed these names on their Honor Rolls.

"A questionnaire was recently sent out to all the churches of a near-by presbytery. This group of churches . . . included both large and small, strong and weak, country and suburban churches. It represented a distinctly American church-going community. Twenty-six churches answered these questions. Two of them did not tabulate their answers because of the peculiar local conditions in a small village, the Honor Roll being a village and not a church affair. These twenty-four answers showed that the churches represented had 665 names on their Honor Rolls. One hundred and ninety-five of these men were active in church work, 351, including the active church workers, were regular in attendance at churches, and 246 seldom or never attended

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soldiers are in any vital connection with the Church." A. H. Gray in "As Tommy Sees Us" writes: "A large majority of the adult males remain outside all religious organization and apparently indifferent to religion."

church. The discrepancy between the total number and the sum of those who attended church and those who did not attend was due to the number of men away from home, either at college or at work. . . . The figures are startling. Out of the 665 names on the Honor Rolls of these churches only about half of them are known to be regular church attendants and 246 are seldom or never at church. This study of the Honor Roll churches shows that the same state of affairs exists at home as existed in a cantonment. The Honor Roll does not show the number of men that have been interested in the Church. It shows instead the number of men in whom the Church is interested, which is a very different thing. It shows the number of men that the Church is responsible for. . . .

"All these facts seem to indicate that the Church is not holding its young men. I have no means of estimating the number of men that do not happen to have their names on the Honor Roll of any church, but I have no doubt that it is a goodly proportion of all the men in a camp. They are entirely unchurched and no church has a feeling of responsibility for them."<sup>11</sup>

This situation is of course not new, but in the army we have seen it with a clarity and convincingness that cannot be escaped. In so far as we have tended to think of the Churches as the nation in its religious capacity we have been far from the truth. Judging by the army, we have a large majority of nominal Christians, a very considerable body of nominal Church members and a small nucleus of conscious Christians and active church members. America is not a Christian nation in any strictly religious sense; it is a mission field.

If definite believers are a small minority, it is quite as clear that definite unbelievers are almost negligible from the point of view of numbers. Of the 25,607 registered in the census at Camp Devens two called themselves agnostic, five atheistic, two freethinkers, four "no religion," while 586 expressed no church preference. Of the 1,487 registered at the southern camp sixteen avowed

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<sup>11</sup> Edwin A. McAlpin, Jr., "Cantonment and Christianity," in *The Presbyterian Advance*.

## 14 RELIGION AMONG AMERICAN MEN

no religion. And these results are in general accord with the observations of chaplains:

"There was only one case in the entire six months that I was in Boulogne of a man signing 'None' as his religion and that man signed 'Atheist.'" "I have met only one man who professed to be an infidel."

### WIDESPREAD IGNORANCE AS TO THE MEANING OF CHRISTIANITY AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

If there is any one point upon which chaplains agree it is in regard to the widespread ignorance as to the meaning of Christianity and church membership. It is of course one thing to be a Christian and quite another to know what Christianity is. It is one thing to be a living member of the body of the Church and another to know what the Church stands for and what membership in it involves. We might well hope that in a "Christian" country men generally, even those without any allegiance to Christ or His Church, would know what Christianity is. Chaplains say that they do not know. And they go beyond that and say that men nominally within the Church, men who have been to Christian schools, are in much the same condition. They do not have the Christian idea of God; they have no clear knowledge of Christ; the Kingdom of God is often a meaningless term to them; the meaning of Christian prayer, the use of sacraments, the obligations of church membership are very, very vague to them. The Church as a teacher has failed to instruct its own membership and present its Gospel to the men just outside its doors. Perhaps the unanimity on this point can best be demonstrated by liberal quotation from chaplains.

"The imperative need of teaching. The average young American knows very little about God, Christ, prayer, faith."

"The great need is definite instruction. I find that most men know little or nothing of Christian dogma."

"They have had little or no religious training."



"Beyond the religious training of the first ten years few have advanced."

"The first thing that I noticed among the men in the camps was a very prevalent lack of any definite religious teaching. This was true of men of all denominations; comparatively few of them had any reason for the faith that was in them."

"A small proportion of church members had clear ideas as to what Christianity is or what church membership involves. You cannot overstress the widespread results of the lack of definite Christian education."

"Should we not include education in the idea of the kingdom of God? I found when it came to this that I had to begin at the beginning and lead men gradually to the idea. Not one in a hundred had apparently ever heard of it. I mean among the church-goers. Religion was to them a personal and individual matter. Of course that must be the foundation, but it ought not stop there, and as far as I can see ministers in general have been letting it stop there, or have been so vague about the kingdom that men haven't caught the idea at all."

"What happened in Private B's case and in that of many others is simply this: When he turned his thoughts inward and started to draw on his religious knowledge he discovered he had practically none. What he did have, what he remembered from the teaching of his church at home, seemed utterly inadequate to meet the situation."<sup>12</sup>

"I honestly believe that three-fourths of the men who went into the camps had only a hazy and very unvital idea of Christianity, despite our Sunday schools, etc.; and that these defects of teaching must be remedied at once."

"The paucity of his knowledge about the Bible and the church has appalled me and made me realize how superficial has been the impact of the Church upon him."

"To my mind the important thing is the revelation of general ignorance about church and religion and so of the almost total failure of the teaching work of the Church."

In this connection the following observations made in regard to the results of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran systems of religious education by chaplains of another denomination are of interest:

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<sup>12</sup> A. S. Lane, in *The Living Church*.

"The large majority do not know what they believe outside the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans."

"My own personal experience was that the Lutherans had as good a hold on their own men in service as anyone, not excepting the Roman Catholics. Their training was definite and they were clear in what they believed. Here we find the lasting influence of the parochial school."<sup>13</sup>

Apparently this experience of failure is not confined to the Church in the United States. A report based on inquiries among Anglican chaplains in the Canadian Chaplains Service finds that the primary shortcoming revealed in the Canadian army is a lack of definite and adequate teaching of the fundamental principles of the Christian faith. And in England the Report of the Archbishops' First Committee of Inquiry has this to say on the situation found in the British army: "It is pointed out in our army, that while 70 per cent of the soldiers are described as 'C. of E.'<sup>14</sup> only an insignificant proportion has either any real knowledge of what a churchman is supposed to believe or any practical appreciation of the use of the sacraments. Even though it must be remembered that of those officially known as 'C. of E.' a large number cannot be regarded as genuine members of the Church, this statement is startling and significant. The Church cannot be said to have attained the end which it set before itself at the Reformation, namely, that the laity should be really instructed in Christian faith and practice."

In terms of our divided American Protestantism the same summary would express the judgment of our chaplains as to the situation found in the American army. Our laity are not really instructed in Christian faith and practice.

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<sup>13</sup> A Lutheran minister of wide experience makes, however, the following comment: "Among the Lutherans of the Eastern states I should say that probably less than 10 per cent have ever had any parochial school training; in the Western states the percentage would be higher but would hardly reach one half. The real secret of the thing is the catechetical training which precedes confirmation and which is universal in the Lutheran Churches."

<sup>14</sup> Church of England.

## THE FIDELITY OF THE FAITHFUL

It would give a false and one-sided impression of the whole situation to close this section of the report without grateful reference to the positive Christianity and the loyalty to the Church of the minority who were largely motivated by loyalty to Christ and His teaching and who had a definite relationship to the Church. In camp and hospital and front lines there were always found men who were strengthened in their personal morality, sustained in the face of danger, suffering, loneliness and death, and given hope and idealism in the midst of the brutal business of war by their personal Christianity and their connection with the Church. They went beyond the morality of the group or the literal demands of army discipline. They had a strong resolution, in the face of the excessive temptations of army life, which kept them clean morally as well as medically and conserved their full power for the service of their cause.<sup>15</sup> In that cause they saw the purposes of God and in that faith served in the army freely and whole-heartedly and without malice. By prayer they bridged the distances between themselves and those they loved at home. In the sacraments they found constant renewal. By faith they met death, not with bravado nor stoicism, but with assurance.

One of the significant aspects of army life has been the large place that the chaplains have held in the esteem and affection of the men. A minister lately back from France who made a special point of investigating the chaplains' work in the A. E. F. reports that after talking incognito with hundreds of officers and men he had found an almost unanimous attitude of personal regard for the chaplains and admiration for their work. But such an attitude

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<sup>15</sup> "Young men living an unnatural life under war conditions have one or two temptations against which the struggle is extraordinarily difficult. I do not say that every definite churchman stands upright, still less that every inarticulate Christian falls, but I am quite sure that this is just one of the things in which definite profession of allegiance to Christ gives a strength which a vague, inarticulate Christianity is powerless to provide." Geoffrey Gordon.

towards these representatives of religion indicates something more important than the fine qualities of the chaplains themselves—it suggests also in an unmistakable way that there was a real demand in the army for the presence of the minister of religion, services of worship and Christian work. The chaplains could not have received the standing that they did receive in the estimation of the men nor could they have effectively carried on their religious work unless in every unit in the army there had been not only a general interest in religion but also many devoted Christian men who carried their Christian loyalty through all the testings of the war.

War commissions and pastors throughout the nation have hosts of letters expressing the gratitude of men for the ministrations of the Church and testifying to the central place which their church connection has had in the making and sustaining of their lives. Such men co-operated generously with chaplains and camp pastors and welfare workers and local churches, adding to their military duties a free service to the Church. In their units they stood for their religion with frankness and simplicity. In their personal religious habits they were faithful and as constant in uniting with the corporate worship of the Church as the pressure and uncertainty of military life would permit.

A Y. M. C. A. worker overseas tells of a private who, in the absence of any chaplain in the unit, gathered a little group together "to read the Bible and talk over the things they read." A chaplain in a reconstruction hospital reports that two or three privates, entirely on their own initiative, organized an enthusiastic Christian Endeavor Society among the convalescent patients. "We thought," said the leader of the group, "that since it had helped us at home to be in a Young People's Society it would help us here and might also encourage some of the other boys who hadn't thought much of the Church before." A letter from a man in France to his mother, just after his

brother had been killed in action, is typical for revealing the strength of character that draws its nourishment from faith in Christ and from Christian training:

"What a pity it is that so many people lack a solid backing in God! It is so manifest over here. I see nearly every day men of all ages who fall utterly before the slightest temptation that crosses their path. . . . They are so pitiful. They never have had God. . . . I so often wonder why I have had this wonderful opportunity and advantage, which so many people never had—to be reared in a truly Christian home. Isn't it wonderful what Christ can do for us? Nothing really matters if we keep close to Him—and so few know that!"

One hesitates to give such illustrations as these of the fidelity of Christian men lest they should seem to the reader to be exceptional instances rather than typical. They are not unusual,—every chaplain has similar stories of his own. A religious work director of the Y. M. C. A. in a great training camp throughout the war could even say:

"My two years at ——— introduced me into a community which was a continual inspiration to me, and the transformations in human lives were to me new chapters in the Acts of the Apostles."

One army surgeon will suffice for final illustration of the thousands of Christian men who like him commanded the admiration and devotion of all with whom they came in contact. The major of his regiment writes of this particular doctor:

"He was a man of quiet, unobtrusive yet strong, unselfish and distinctive personality, always cheerful, giving his whole-hearted devotion to the care of the men. I considered him one of the highest types of Christian character, and I discovered that he was continuously engaged in some Christian work. He had had a Bible class in my battalion for some six months, which he founded and conducted and he was generally looked upon as the most genuine chaplain we had. He was always on the job as a regimental surgeon, and at the same time always on

the job in all religious work. I considered him a rare man. He was very capable, always mentally wide awake and was considered by me, my officers and men as one of the most sincere and genuine Christians we knew. The battalion had consistently the best health record in the regiment."

There was nothing obtrusive nor religiously professional about this surgeon. He was simply a Christian layman who carried his Christian faith and his Christian life with him wherever he went and who made Christianity a winning and beautiful thing to the men of his regiment.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MEN AND THE CHURCH

In the current discussions of religion in the army, there has been considerable emphasis on the criticism of the Church and the Christianity of the Church expressed by "the man in the street." It is clear that the British chaplains both found and expressed a good deal of criticism. Most of the English books on religion in the army, such as "A Student in Arms," "Papers from Picardy," "As Tommy Sees Us," "The Church in the Furnace," and "God and the Soldier," deal with it.

Were these criticisms of the Church and the religion it preaches found in the American army? They were certainly found. But their actual extent and seriousness are very hard to weigh. Chaplains sometimes heard them. Chaplains frequently express them on their own account or in an effort to explain men's alienation from the Church. The criticisms are quite as interesting and important as coming from many Christian ministers in service as from "the man in the street." Probably they were far more common among officers and college men than among men generally. At any rate they were found. But that is very different from saying that they represent the opinions of the average soldier. Many American soldiers belonged to some branch of the Church and were contented in their membership. Many more respected it as representative of the goodness and piety of those they loved. Many were so indifferent to the Church that they spent little time thinking about it, either favorably or otherwise. Some criticized it.

In so far as their criticisms can be gathered up they

group themselves under two heads: (1) Criticisms of the Church for inadequacy in its moral ideal and moral life and (2) Criticisms of the Church for unreality or triviality.

#### CRITICISMS OF THE CHURCH FOR INADEQUACY IN ITS MORAL IDEAL AND MORAL LIFE

In any discussion of the criticisms that are commonly made of the Church it is exceedingly difficult to know how to estimate their real significance. What men lightly say about the Church does not necessarily represent their own inner attitude to it. Superficial criticisms may simply be a way of excusing their own indifference to any spiritual interpretation of life. Nevertheless it is important for us to give thoughtful attention to what men do say.

The following are typical of the criticisms reported or expressed by chaplains:

1. *That the religion preached by the Church is primarily a selfish thing—the seeking of a personal reward. That it is “all an elaborate attempt to make sure their own salvation or compass their own spiritual growth. The motive behind it all is self-regarding.”*

“Some men here seem to feel that to be religious means that you are worried as to what will happen to you when you ‘go west.’”

“Men have been taught to save their own precious hides. The end of religion seemed to be getting men into heaven, not fitting them to live on earth.” (An officer.)

“How intolerable to those who have caught the devotion of the army is a certain habitual selfishness in the Church’s appeal to men! If in France today, in speaking of soldiers, anyone suggests that they will soon die, that if they do they may go to hell unless they are ‘prepared,’ and that therefore they had better believe something religious to avoid the contingency, that man incontinently shuts up or else he leaves France, or more probably he does both. . . . There is a fundamental antipathy between such talk and the spirit in which the whole army



is living. The former is thoroughly self-centered. The latter is gloriously self-forgetful." . . . "Come to God that you may be safe—will that do? Come to God for there is in His hands solace for believers—will that do? . . . Will any mean, self-centered motive do?"<sup>16</sup>

2. *That Christianity as presented by the Church is mainly a negative, prohibitory thing, a collection of "don'ts," a matter of abstinence.*

"They are looking upon the Church as a negative, prohibitory institution only."

"Each of them knows a clergyman whom he likes, but they regard the profession as an association of trained kill-joys."

"The men of the army quarrel with the negativeness of the churches' ethics. . . . The soldiers seriously think that the character which the churches seek consists of little more than abstinence from a multitude of pleasurable things. . . . The righteousness of the saints, in the general estimation of the army, is little more than *anti*—anti-dance, theater, cards, drink, smoke, profanity, and all fun on Sundays."<sup>17</sup>

3. *That even if the moral standards of the Church are good, Church members do not live up to them. Church members are not marked by their positive sacrificial goodness. In fact their lives are often peculiarly colorless or narrow or effeminate. They are frequently harsh and ungenerous in their judgments of other men. The individual lives of professing Christians are not good enough to attract and convert.*

"What is needed is not a new Church but a new spirit in its members."

"Whatever antipathy to the Church may be found is usually traced to the hypocrisy of some persons connected with the Church, which has caused the observer to adopt an attitude of cynicism."

"Lack of sincerity in living. Our ethical demands of a constructive sort are not high enough. We do not sacri-

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<sup>16</sup> H. E. Fosdick, "The Trenches and the Church at Home," *Atlantic Monthly*.  
<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

fice enough to make any real impression upon these young fellows who pitilessly observe that we who worship the Supreme Sacrifice are not very good sacrificers, and that the Church condones our ill success at it."

4. *That in the life within the Churches there is not the generous and unaffected comradeship which would be appropriate. The Church talks of brotherhood, men say, but it is not a brotherhood itself. It has not the "all-one-body feeling." The class distinctions "of this world" are carried over with little alleviation into the fellowship of believers. And the interests and contentments of the possessing classes in the existing economic order blind avowed Christians to the needs and aspirations of the great body of men.*

"For quite a while I have looked for the spirit of Jesus Christ in the work of the Christian Church and according to my way of thinking it is damned hard to find it." (An enlisted man.)

"In practically every church there is a social standard set and only those persons are welcome who grade up to that standard. They do not actually throw you out bodily, but they throw you out by the attitude they take. If you are under-grade they do not notice you at all." (An enlisted man.)

"The Church caters altogether too much to the moneyed class." (An enlisted man.)

"My church in West Virginia is supported by a rich man in a mining community, where he owns everything, including the soul of the minister."

"Out in the oil country of the West its ministers cater to the oil barons." (An enlisted man.)

"At the end of the sermon a keen young fellow came up and said: 'Chaplain, that was saying something all right, but it is mighty funny talk from an ————. I've been around to a lot of your churches, and I never saw one yet where the man with the long green, no matter what sort of a fellow he was, didn't run things pretty much to suit himself. Lots of folks believe that with you plunder is a sure sign of piety. You're training with the wrong team.'"<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> B. I. Bell, in *The Churchman*.

"Comradeship is the glory of the army, and in the comradeship previous wealth, rank, occupation do not count. . . . I do not see how these soldiers are coming back to many of our churches, where pews are owned or rented, and where the congregation is so seated that a man's relative income can be estimated by his comparative distance from the altar of the Lord's sacrifice. . . . There is a shocking incongruity between an attack at the front—rich and poor, learned and ignorant, prominent and obscure going over the top together—and a congregation in a wealthy metropolitan church singing: 'Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war.'"<sup>19</sup>

#### CRITICISMS OF THE CHURCH FOR UNREALITY OR TRIVIALITY

1. *It is sadly true that many men fail to see in the Church primarily a company of people committed to a common view of life and following a common way of life. They think of it in terms of buildings and officials. As such it seems to some a convenient institution for the performance of conventional ceremonies, venerable, respectable, but not much concerned with the real business of life.*

"Two things work together to keep men out of the Churches. First, the counter attractions, and second, the failure of the Church to relate its life to the vital interests of men's life. What do men think of the Churches? They reverence them as they do their grandmother."

"The Church to them is not representative of the fight for a square deal; it is for the women and children and disconsolate. You go there to be married and buried, but it is not the natural resort of healthy, active men."

"He believes the Churches should be supported and is willing to contribute money for that purpose, but services and sermons are not in his line, frankly they bore him."

"I find a general belief that it is impossible to mix religion with business."

2. *Much that the Church emphasizes men find unimportant, uninteresting, and not especially relevant to*

<sup>19</sup> H. E. Fosdick, "The Trenches and the Church at Home," *Atlantic Monthly*.

*Christianity. In sermons and services it often seems interested in antiquarian details for their own sake. The tones of its ministers sound artificial to some, and the language of its sermons and liturgies is unintelligible to many.*<sup>20</sup>

"The charge is brought against the organized Church with its formulas and ceremonies and numberless divisions that it has 'taken tithe of mint, anise, and cummin and omitted the weightier matters of the law.'"

"They demand reverence, but it must be genuine, virile, of the people, not of the choir, free from holy tones (which are just as common to Methodist deacons as they are to Anglican clergy), downright and honest. The amount of ritual makes no difference—it is the sincerity with which it is done that makes the difference."

"The belief that church services are dry and uninteresting and have a message chiefly for women and children accounts in some degree for the alienation of men."

"The war has disclosed the fact that many Protestant ministers have been out of touch with modern life and have been using a vocabulary which plain men find meaningless. Virile men insist upon understanding what is said and having what is said spoken in plain English and to the point."

"Sermons as usually served up are terribly thin. The minister begins by saying, 'I take my text this morning, brethren, from so and so' . . . , and then spends most of his time in telling you all about that text, and who taught it, and where it was written. If that same minister preached right from his shoulder against adultery and went into details, that would be real preaching, and would count. He ought to preach about what happens in 1919, not about a lot of details concerning Jonah and Jeremiah, and Jesus and John." (An enlisted man.)

"If we could choose our own chaplain, he would be something of this order: We want a man-sized man, with a real man's voice when he talks and we want him to use

<sup>20</sup> "The simple truth of the matter is that the reason why these men do not go to Church is that they are not interested in the things which the Church provides. They are at one with the Church in many of her teachings, but it seems to them that she expresses those teachings in a different language from their own, different not only in words but in habits of thought as well. To them the Church is a great organized unreality. They neither desire it nor do they hate it. They simply leave it alone as a thing entirely out of their line." John Kelman, "The War and Preaching."

ordinary everyday language and say exactly what he means. No beating around the bush, just plain, unadulterated facts. We want his talks to deal with the facts of today, facts that we can apply to our own lives and we want them to be interesting and full of what we can see is truth, and last but not least, we do not want to have to sit and listen to him for three hours at a time."

3. *That the "doings" of the Church and the tasks it gives men to do are often so trivial.*

"Men of ability will not feel like doing for the church something which some office boy could do just as well."

"What these men want is not a lot of services, nor to be urged to take up the offering or usher, but an actual task to accomplish and one in which they can use their own personality. To have such work to give these men, the objective of the Church must be not her own preservation, but the Kingdom of God, and this objective must be formulated in very concrete terms that seem to the soldier to be worth the battle."

"When the preacher attempts to handle practical matters, . . . he jumps in on matters that are not worth while; in the big crises he seems to prefer to let the devil have his way."

We believe that many American chaplains would subscribe to the following statement in a recent British report on the condition of the Church:

"The most serious difficulties we actually find in practice arise from the fact that the Church is not good enough rather than because men and women are too bad to care about religion. . . . They demand of the Church plain evidence of the vital power of the Christianity it professes. They ask to see within the church more sacrifice, more fellowship, more heroism, more brotherhood, more zeal for the uplifting of human life and for the regeneration of the whole social order than they can discover within its border. That is the standard by which they are judging the Church in the midst of them."<sup>21</sup>

The criticisms of the religious work of the Y. M. C. A. in certain quarters may have something to teach the

<sup>21</sup> Report of the Archbishops' Third Committee of Inquiry.

Church, quite apart from the question as to whether the criticisms were generally justified. They indicate certain failings of religious organizations to which some classes of men are especially sensitive and which they find thoroughly repellent. The things most commonly criticized in the religious work of the Association were the following:

1. *The attempt to "capture" men rather than minister to them, or to minister to them for the sake of making a "capture."* What men respond to is disinterested service. Any suggestion that they are being fished for and that some pride will be taken in "the catch" is especially repellent.

"Too often it discounts a very genuine service by showing that after all it was trying, not so much actually to minister to as to capture men."

2. *The deception of secreting a religious appeal in a program of entertainment.* How often this occurred we do not know. It did occur occasionally and was the source of considerable criticism.<sup>22</sup>

"One of the most damnable forms of insincerity is the camouflage used to beguile men to attend services unknowingly. A man goes to the Y. M. C. A. to see a moving picture. The psychology of his consciousness is all set for amusement at that moment. But, no! he must pay for his amusement by sitting through a sermon, and is there anything more unchristian than that? Or perhaps only the service is held but the camouflagery comes in the advertising. 'Hear Dr. So and So of Toledo speak tonight.' And instead of a lecture, as expected, it is a regular religious service."

"When we want vaudeville, we know where to get it; when we want religion, we know where to get it. We don't want it mixed."

<sup>22</sup> Probably this criticism, and some of the others, were found mainly among officers rather than among privates. A member of the Committee who had experience in the army throughout the whole period of the war writes: "The ordinary doughboy as I met him took religion and the Church for granted. . . . He did not worry if his movies and sermons were mixed. . . . The persons who were sensitive on these points were certain cynical, indifferent, college-bred officers who had to find something wrong in religion as presented to justify their not engaging in its service."

3. *Condescension.* Men are remarkably sensitive to any note of spiritual pride, self-consciousness, or self-satisfaction in a religious ministry. A ministry is successful and wins men's confidence just in so far as its attitude is that of those who said, "When saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?"

"No A. E. F. man from now on will pass the tambourine of a Salvation Army meeting without putting some money in it. Their kind of religion captured our respect. They came with nothing, but they gave themselves, and brought into the midst of our terrible experience an indispensable something which we call the Christian religion."

4. *Red Tape.* The machinery of evangelism—the signing of pledge cards—and the overregulating of practical ministrations, have both been criticized.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARD DENOMINATIONS

Although a great majority of the men expressed some church preference when urged to, it is quite clear that the preference was not very emphatic. Even among men who were on the fringe of active membership or attended the services available in the army the feeling of denominational distinctions appears to have been very slight. There was of course a fairly sharp line between Catholics and Protestants. "Since becoming divisional chaplain I find that the denominational problem resolves itself into this form. There are Catholics and there are Protestants. The *via media* is utterly incomprehensible to the ordinary enlisted man." Unless carefully instructed to the contrary, men frequently expressed their preference in terms of "Catholic" or "Protestant." Within Protestantism the "unchurched majority" do not find the divisions especially significant. Indifference to them is probably more characteristic than hostility.

"The soldier knew very little about doctrinal differences between churches and cared less. It seemed senseless to

him that the Protestant Church should be divided into denominations."<sup>23</sup>

"With reference to denominations, the men have no comments to make whatever, simply because they do not think deeply enough about the situation. There is a very widespread feeling, however, that it doesn't matter much which church you belong to; at bottom they all stand pretty much for the same thing." (An enlisted man.)

"There was quite a disposition among the men to assert that not only 'one church' but 'one religion' is as good as another."

"With regard to the attitude of the men toward denominationalism one can hardly say that they are impatient with denominations simply because they do not reflect about them. It is nearer the truth to say that they ignore denominational lines. They simply do not care to what church a minister or a chaplain belongs."

More significant than the attitude of the "unchurched majority" is the way in which the members of the various Protestant bodies ignored denominational lines under army conditions. In the main they showed little interest in the affiliation of the chaplain and rarely expressed any desire for distinctively denominational ministrations or services. The exceptions were mostly in the case of the liturgical or sacramental churches, such as the Lutheran and Episcopalian.

"There seemed to be little differentiation among members of Protestant denominations with the possible exception of Episcopalians." (An enlisted man.)

"Men apart from the Roman Church and the Lutheran have practically no interest in denominational difference."

"At least under war conditions there was no Protestant denominational feeling or desire for special denominational services."

"The church distinctions were almost wholly disregarded. I don't remember a dozen occasions in nearly a year's experience when I was asked to what church I belonged, and it seldom occurred to me to make that inquiry unless I had particular reason to do so. . . . If I did not represent the particular body to which they

<sup>23</sup> Chaplain Ross Miller, in *Lutheran Church Work and Review*.



belonged I did represent the ministry of the church and that seemed to be sufficient."

"They wanted their own church providing it emphasized the sacramental life, otherwise they didn't care what church they attended. Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and Christians looked for the Holy Communion weekly and expected it."

"Twice I heard at Camp Upton of 'camp pastors' who tried to hold a denominational meeting—once for communion and once for a social evening. In both cases the response was pitifully small. Dr. Manning did have a regular early communion service, but the denominational note was not stressed, and everyone was invited, no questions asked. I used to go myself when I could."

"Careful analysis showed that only about 10 per cent of the Protestants in camp, with nothing else to do, care enough for their own church to attend its services on Sunday morning. Anywhere from 25 to 30 per cent of the Protestants attended the undenominational services. Even in the sacraments and prayer the men showed absolute disregard for denominational lines."<sup>24</sup>

It may be said that the general attitude of Protestants as to the validity of the sacraments as administered by the several denominations is much like that of the public towards the marriage and burial services. "The unchurched public at present is inclined to regard it as one of its prerogatives to claim the functions of priest or clergyman in celebrating a wedding or a death." And though individuals may have some preference, the public is "not too particular whether its knot is tied by Presbyterian or Episcopalian."<sup>25</sup>

Just as in the case of many people in civil life the men were very largely influenced by the personality of the individual chaplain in their choice of ministrations or contentment with those they had. A striking example of this is described by an overseas chaplain:

"One day word came from headquarters that each man should make out a card denoting his religious persuasion. I knew that most of the men were Protestants; so when

<sup>24</sup> Edwin A. McAlpin, Jr., in *The Continent*.

<sup>25</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," *Atlantic Monthly*.

I looked over the returning cards and saw three Jews and but three Protestants registered, and all the rest Roman Catholics, I was amazed. Calling a sergeant to me I remonstrated with him. 'Now you know this is not right,' I said. 'You know these men are Protestants.' Then the sergeant smiled and explained that all the boys had gotten together and decided to be 'Roman Catholics' for the duration of the war. 'They were afraid,' said the sergeant, 'that if they all registered as Protestants, Headquarters would decide there weren't enough Catholics to keep you and the men would lose their chaplain!'

## CHAPTER III

### THE FAITH OF THE MAJORITY

Having said that only a small proportion of men are definitely Christian and that there is a widespread ignorance as to the truths of Christianity, it is important to go on to say that there is faith among the majority. Only a small minority are consciously atheistic. The rest have some religious ideas. They may be vague, submerged, far removed from a developed Christianity. They may be definitely unchristian. But they are there. It is well to remind ourselves that even in a Christian country religion and Christianity are not synonymous.

To generalize on the faith of the majority is admittedly hazardous. Statistics are not available and would be of little value if they were. Nor have we any considerable body of clearly expressed judgment on the part of chaplains. But from our own experience and contact with chaplains we believe the following to be descriptive of the religious condition of the large number of men—many of them nominally Christian, many of them half in the Church, a few of them antagonistic to the Church—who constituted the majority in the American army.

First of all, *they tended to think that religion is primarily a matter of deeds rather than of belief*, that belief does not matter much. "The feeling is quite prevalent that conduct is all. Belief, sacramental life, worship, etc., tend to enter as substitutes for conduct." Very many would certainly agree with Donald Hankey that "Christianity is a way of life, not an explanation of life." And in line with this tendency they were inclined to minimize the whole place and function of worship, man's communion with unseen realities, the relationship

with God. If religion is to them largely a matter of deeds it is also largely a matter of man's relation with man. The average soldier would see point in "Thou shalt love thy neighbor." He easily overlooks "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God" as the first commandment of Christianity, or merges it into love of neighbor.

"A soldier student, when asked what should be the task of the preacher when the war was over, said that he must become untheological, turn right-about-face and preach humanity."

"Their understanding of religion is largely humanitarian. They find it difficult to see that righteousness involves relationship to God as well as a duty to man."

"I call a religion a bum religion that only asks you to worship God without getting down to more practical matters."

"Their religious faith, as I understand it, is very largely summed up in ethical precepts. Religion and righteousness are synonymous."

"His convictions are few and largely ethical."

"I found a general belief that theology was unimportant and had no relation to life."

*There was almost unanimously an idea of God* but it probably did not play a large part in the ordinary consciousness of the average man as he entered the army. If Donald Hankey is right in saying, "Religion means being aware of God as a factor in one's environment," the majority of men before the war were not very religious. God was not a very large conscious factor in their environment. The thought of Him did not affect their plans very frequently. Few of them had any habitual practice of recollecting His being or will. But the idea was certainly there with the great body of men. "There is a universal belief in God." That is a common report. "Most of them have an admiration for Jesus Christ and a hazy belief in a Supreme Ruler of the universe, but this does not lead them definitely to undertake a Christian program for their own lives."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Chaplain A. O. Brown, in *The Christian Advocate*.

The idea of God was generally vague. Most of us would have to answer to that charge. It was mainly a dim faith in Providence, in a good purpose behind life, in a friendly "control." "They believed in Him as the Supreme Being, as the Ruler of the Universe—but their faith, in most cases, did not seem to go far enough—it was not personal enough. There was that belief and that faith but it seemed to be far distant—His hand was the guiding hand of Destiny but He was not the controlling and guiding One in the everyday affairs of life."

Of God as a present or future Judge of their personal lives most men had little consciousness. But probably "most men believed that God was on the side of right and were confident that in the end, Right, Liberty, and Justice would prevail over Despotism and Injustice." In the case of the few who had a more definite religious consciousness there was often the feeling that in waging this war they were doing what God would approve and were fighting on His side.

*A vague belief in immortality was also general among men as they came out of civilian life into the army. Whether or not their belief can be called "Christian" is a debatable point. It would be interesting to know how largely it is Christian in origin, how largely it is closely associated with the Resurrection.<sup>27</sup> We do not know. It is for the most part an undefined faith that death is not the end, that there is more life ahead. "Most of them take it for granted, apparently, that death is simply a transition, important perhaps, but not terrible, and that they are to live on, elsewhere."<sup>28</sup> "Don't remember meeting a man (100,000 passed through this camp) who did not believe in the continuity of life." Miss Kirkland believes that "this assurance takes almost no color from*

<sup>27</sup> In this connection Dr. Kelman's judgment as to the attitude of the average man towards the Resurrection is interesting. "It would be difficult to name a doctrine which, in the theological statement of it, had less interest or even less meaning for soldiers. The stories of the resurrection of our Lord are very beautiful, but they are out of the sphere of the ordinary man's experience." ("The War and Preaching.")

<sup>28</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," *Atlantic Monthly*.

previous education, Catholic, Protestant, or agnostic." At any rate, it appears to have little of moral judgment involved in it, as conditioning the fact or the character of the future life. "Of course immortality and universal salvation must be distinguished. Most of the men believed in both, but I have not yet found any man who did not believe in the first at least."

These beliefs in God and immortality were for most men ideas "in reserve." They were not motives so much as "comforts." They were not controlling beliefs in the sense of being frequently thought and frequently brought to bear on men's decisions and actions. Rather they were comforting thoughts upon which men fell back in times of stress. In this sense they were widely distributed. In this sense the majority of men as we came to know them in the army were religious.

*Concerning the men's idea of Christ it is difficult to speak with any confidence.* One of the most striking characteristics of the testimony received from chaplains and others in the preparation of this report is the meagerness of evidence on this point, in spite of the fact that one of the questions asked in a questionnaire to which a considerable number of replies was received was, "What do the men think about Jesus Christ?" Perhaps this lack of evidence is in itself evidence of a significant kind. It would seem to imply that there was not sufficient definiteness or clarity in the men's minds on the subject to make it possible even for close observers to attempt any generalization.

From the few testimonies that have come to us it would appear that when men think of Christ it is with a general feeling of great respect and admiration:

"Most of them have an admiration for Jesus Christ."

"The universal testimony of chaplains and welfare workers with whom I have talked regarding the soldier's attitude toward Jesus Christ is that this attitude was always one of respect. The use of Christ's name in pro-

fanity was often unconscious. It was always employed to emphasize contentions, an unconscious tribute to the greatness of Jesus. No man ever swore *at* Jesus; His name was brought in to help focus attention. On the wall of nearly every Y. M. C. A. hut was some representation of Jesus and very few men passed by it without at some time pausing and gazing upon it with moral earnestness. The application of the teaching of Jesus to political or social problems in secular address invariably received the most respectful attention, and unless obviously distorted seemed to be accepted as final." (A Y. M. C. A. secretary of large experience.)<sup>29</sup>

This testimony would be corroborated in a general way by great numbers of ministers in the camps who found that whenever they spoke to the men of the character of Christ, or of Christ as their Comrade, there was a most unmistakable response. But many feel that those who customarily think of Christ at all are very few.

"Christ occupied small place in their thoughts."

"Those who think of Him at all consider Him an ideal kind of man. This number is very small. The rest do not think of Christ."

Probably it would be fair to say, although our evidence here is more meager than elsewhere, that so far as men thought of Christ it was with feelings of admiration but that their respect rested on rather vague impres-

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. the conclusion of the British committee which was convened by Dr. D. S. Cairns and the Bishop of Winchester and which has prepared the report entitled, "The Army and Religion":

"There is practically universal respect and even reverence for Jesus Christ. This is quite plainly seen whenever the men disclose their real thoughts about Him, though it is often superficially disguised by the profane use of His name. . . . He is recognized by all the serious thinking men as the best of the race, though there is this very frequent qualification, which seems inconsistent, that the heroic side of His character is largely unknown, and it is clear that, even as a man, the outlines of His figure are very dim. We are told also that they do not seem to think much about Him. It is only when they do think that this reverence appears. They distinguish Him quite clearly from the Churches, which, as we shall see in a later chapter, they criticize without stint. But the whole deeper side of the Church's teaching about Jesus Christ seems to have little or no hold upon them, except of the loosest kind. Of Jesus as the Son of God, and as the Atoning Sacrifice for the world, they have little or no knowledge at all. Even more significant, perhaps, is it that our question as to whether the men knew of the Living Christ, that is to say, the Christ whose presence and power are realized by His servants, met with a negative that was practically universal, and that in many cases, when this Gospel was preached to them, it came as a startling novelty and attracted immediate attention."

sions more than on any definite knowledge of His life or clear understanding of His teachings.

"Most men still carry over from Sunday-school days a general idea that 'Christ was the best man that ever lived,' but they could tell you exceedingly little about His life or character. They would vaguely say that He was good and kind and unselfish. To great numbers He was hardly more than the sorrowful figure that they had seen in stained-glass windows, or a dim figure of the past far removed from their own present interests and needs."

With life's fundamental alternatives, with the question of final destiny, *with what is usually meant by salvation, most men were little preoccupied.*<sup>30</sup> The anxious soul was comparatively rare. What William James called healthy-minded religion was dominant. "Very few men seemed to have any feeling akin to repentance further than a vague acknowledgment that they had been foolish. However they may regard sin it is not to them a cause of fear or sorrow."<sup>31</sup>

It is worth while to remind ourselves that if religious faith was bewilderingly inarticulate, to such an extent as to tempt one to deny its existence, the same was true of men's idealism in regard to the war. That too was

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the following: "An overwhelming amount of evidence from many sources shows that there is today little or no conscious sense of sin. There is a latent sense of something wrong, but of sin as guilt there is very often no sense at all, and little conscious need of a Saviour. That this is to some extent due to defective presentation and consequent misunderstanding of the meaning of salvation is undoubted, but it may also be due to the lack of a positive ideal which can through very contrast produce the sense of sin. Ideas which dominate the national life always affect the thoughts and ideals of the individual, and the failure of the Church to impress the nation with its own thought of God probably accounts in part for the inadequate sense of sin."

"Superficial ideas about evolution, with a notion that everything is coming right in the end, a shallow fatalism, and easy going ideas about judgment and the character of God do not tend to make a man say, 'What shall I do to be saved?' It would seem, therefore, that while, as ever, repentance and remission of sins must be preached in Christ's name, we must at the same time remember that the fear and horror of judgment and the horror of sin, which has been in all ages such a powerful incentive to repentance, is today perhaps weaker than ever before. The profound difficulty of finding a motive for repentance and amendment that will appeal to our generation lies at the root of much of our ineffective evangelism." (Report of the Archbishops' Third Committee of Inquiry.)

<sup>31</sup> The following comment, however, from one who read the galley proof of this report is worth noting: "This depends on the appeal that was made. A number of ministers have told me that they had never seen the purely evangelistic appeal responded to so readily as among the soldiers. My experience is rather with your opinion, though I have not made the other appeal."



vague, obscure, shy, fluctuating. It sometimes seemed as though there was nothing but a boyish football spirit, or a blind following of national mob impulse in the motives that carried men into the war. The response to the more conscious and ideal motives which were so prominent in American official utterance was hidden far down in the soldier's nature.

## CHAPTER IV

### MORAL STANDARDS AND LIFE OF THE MAJORITY

When we turn from religious ideas or beliefs to moral standards and moral life we begin to penetrate further into what has been called "the religion of the inarticulate." Donald Hankey, who gave this phrase its currency, insisted that "it did not necessarily follow that because a man was inarticulate he therefore had no religion. Action and objects of admiration, these [are] the things that we must watch if we would discover the true religion of the inarticulate." Many have found in the standards and life of men an encouragement which more than compensated for the slight hold which organized and explicit religion appears to have.

What were the virtues men admired and practiced? What were the vices they hated? What were their weaknesses?

Some caution needs to be observed in judging the character of the average man by the qualities he showed in the army. The life was abnormal in many ways; men were separated from some of the normal social restraints and stimuli and given a new set of restraints and stimuli. The army was a male community. It was "monastic without the religious impulse of monasticism."<sup>32</sup> And women are pace setters in our present social system. The army was a cooperative, a communistic community, where property rights were slight and where mutual dependence was perfectly clear. Public opinion had the same exceptional power over the individual that it has in other highly unified communities such as a school or

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<sup>32</sup> MacLean and Sclater, "God and the Soldier."

college. The discipline and tradition of the army exalted certain virtues. Certain virtues were expected of every man—courage, for instance. And all the force of training, popular opinion, and police power pointed in that direction. A very strong character, a man whose standards and habits were thoroughly established and independent, would, of course, show himself unchanged. But the average man whose character is fluid and very responsive to his environment may be quite different in the army and out of it. It is not safe to expect the virtues he showed in war to be carried over into peace. Nor is it likely that some of the vices will be carried over either.

"A man's mental self cannot be separated from his daily habits, from the environment he lives in, from the kind of difficulties he is coping with, from the plans, inhibitions, and ideas he is occupied with. In all these ways the mind of the soldier is marked off from the mind of the same man in civil life. Soldiering is a life having its own special strains and its own standards. It not only brings different muscles into action; it tests character in new places."<sup>23</sup>

Illustration of the effect of the unusual environment may be seen in the way that men varied according to circumstances, and in the striking contradictions in character produced.

"You can't imagine how great a difference there is between an army at war and an army at peace. In time of war it is inspiring to be in an army. All petty causes and purposes are fairly burned up in the intensity of the great common aim. Men lose their selfishness, their greedy ambition, and all the unlovable part of their nature when in the heat of the fight. The degree of this change varies exactly with the distance from the actual front lines and with the degree of active service in which the man is engaged. The nearest thing you will ever see on this earth to a bunch of saints and angels is a bunch of infantry going through a bad barrage. I have seen my own bunch of roughneck truck drivers in a tight place and know how we felt towards each other. I recall one

<sup>23</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Morale and Its Enemies."

occasion when we got in a traffic jam in the middle of the night while loaded with artillery ammunition. Those boys sat on those trucks loaded with enough high explosives to blow them into shreds and calmly pulled each other out of mud holes while the Germans shelled the road steadily. They cursed each other lustily the whole time, but never a grumble or a refusal to do anything necessary to clear the ground. I remember that at that moment I loved every one of them like a brother and I think they all felt the same way about it. The worst old pickpocket in the bunch seemed like the most lovable man I had ever met. The infantry went through that same experience in an intensified degree and for greater lengths of time. I am convinced, however, that this was felt very little outside of the actual danger zone and that it was not felt at all in the camps in the U. S." (Soldier's letter.)

In "Papers from Picardy" T. W. Pym gives a very illuminating case which might readily have occurred in any army.

"A friend of mine had his blanket taken; so he watched his opportunity and took another man's. The weather was bitterly cold. He was not the least ashamed of his action, nor was he sorry for the man he had robbed even when he found that the loser was sufficiently scrupulous or clumsy not to replace his loss in a similar fashion. He would never have stolen the man's money, yet he could see no inconsistency in taking what was at the time worth much more to either of them than a fistful of five-franc notes. Later he risked his life in a gallant attempt to save the man he had previously despoiled—not, I feel sure, in any spirit of remorse—but for the simple fact that whereas it would be unreasonable to suffer cold and discomfort instead of another man, it was perfectly reasonable and indeed necessary to risk wounds and death itself in order to save the same man's life. The fine courage of the last act was in accordance with the discipline and training and the traditions of the British army, the theft of a blanket was outside the scope of discipline; it came under the influence of no tradition, save the oldest in the world's history—getting's keeping."

The fact is that in the army the same men might be at

different times either Good Samaritans or thieves. Men who were shiftless, unwilling to share in the maintenance of the community's life, showed themselves ready and eager to die for it.<sup>34</sup> Men who risked death and suffered pain for their country will not in the years ahead always live for it. In great measure these contradictions were due to the abnormal conditions, in part they are but the mystery of

"These common souls and human  
Who laugh their sins abroad  
But hide the love of woman  
And seek the fear of God."

In spite of these cautions it probably remains true that in general the virtues admired and practiced in the army, the vices hated there, and the weaknesses shown there, are fairly characteristic of the average man in civil life.

#### VIRTUES GENERALLY ADMIRIED AND FREQUENTLY FOUND

The lists of virtues generally admired by men in the army and frequently found show a great deal of similarity. General assent would be given to such an analysis as the following:

"Certain qualities are universally approved and admired in a soldier and they are all positive qualities. He will stand up and fight to resent a personal insult or to help out a friend. He will be there when the battle is on however much he may be A. W. O. L. in peace times. He will be generous with his money and with any other good thing he has in his possession. He will be loyal to

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<sup>34</sup> "Years before this war the penetrating writer of an 'Open Letter to English Gentlemen,' published in *The Hibbert Journal*, maintained that it was a far harder thing to live for one's community than to die for it—obviously so, as he said, since so many more were found to do the latter than to do the former. Many a man of ease and independence, who in the days of peace could not spare from his amusements the time to acquire first-hand knowledge of the social conditions of the masses in an attempt to better them, has for many months on end denied himself both ease and independence in order to learn how to fight and, fighting—if necessary—to die. Many a man who would not have given up a shooting-box for one year in order to give a hundred families on the borders of destitution the chance of a fresh start in the colonies, has since laid down his life in defense of shooting-box and slum-dwelling alike." T. W. Pym.

his mother and his home and will show it by the letters he writes and the size of his allotment. He will be modest about his own achievements, will lie marvellously to save a friend, but will tell the straight of it when being questioned on his own account. He will get along with a minimum of growling and will respond when the hard pull comes every time."

"One might be almost content here simply to urge complete loyalty, in the new life at home, to what has come to be thought the soldier's own fourfold ideal of courage, unselfishness, generosity, and modesty, especially when the ideal is supplemented by what the editor of *The Stars and Stripes* says might be called the soldier's great fifth virtue—cheerful patience."<sup>35</sup>

F. B. Smith after considerable inquiry among troops in France published an article entitled "Four Sins the Soldiers Say They Hate," in the course of which he summarized his conclusions as follows:

"All these tests, among widely separated groups, produced answers so nearly identical that it seems beyond question that we may take the result as the code of morals which our soldiers have set up for themselves.

"Now, what is this code?

"First—Courage

"Second—Unselfishness

"Third—Generosity

"Fourth—Modesty or Humility

"These four qualities were put at the top by such an overwhelming majority that there was absolutely no question of their place there. And when we reversed the process and asked for the 'meanest sins,' the answers checked up the same. For the sins placed at the head of the list were:

"First—Cowardice

"Second—Selfishness

"Third—Stinginess

"Fourth—Boastfulness."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Henry Churchill King, "For a New America in a New World."

The British accounts are to the same effect. "Courage, selflessness, and loyalty—these are the virtues that are being brought back from the bloodstained fields by the men." ("God and the Soldier.")

"Their cheerfulness, stubbornness, patience, generosity, humility, and willingness to suffer and to die." ("Thoughts on Religion at the Front.")

"They certainly did believe in unselfishness, generosity, charity, and humility." ("A Student in Arms.")

<sup>36</sup> In the *American Magazine*.

The virtues that emerge from many reports may be summarized as follows:

1. *Courage*, especially physical courage—a carrying on in spite of fear—the ability to go steadfastly into danger, pain, and death.

“This should be carefully widened to include the virtue of holding on even when one is afraid. Contrast must not be made between courage and fear, but between courage and failure. Many soldiers have testified to their downright fear under fire, but have rejoiced that they held on in spite of it. They make a good deal of the purely corporate force of this virtue.”

2. *Unselfishness*, especially a consideration for others when wounded, and readiness to take great risks to save a comrade's life.

“We had a sergeant in our company who was shot through the lung. . . . We hardly picked him up when he said huskily, ‘Don't touch me, fellows—look after those other boys. They are worse off than I am.’”

“One of the most impressive things a man with a heart of any sort is bound to notice in the war is the universal way in which the wounded men try to help one another. This is noticeable everywhere, in No Man's Land, in the trenches, in a scrap, in the hospitals and dressing stations—everywhere the chivalric, noble, generous, American impulse to help the other fellow first.”<sup>37</sup>

3. *Generosity*, open-handedness in the sharing of small luxuries and personal possessions.

“I find few soldiers or workers who don't magnify this. They point out that the hoarding is unnecessary when more is so easily had, and that it is hardly decent to pretend personal necessity when the supply is so readily restored. A number of thoughtful men have commented on the curious feeling they had of an abundant supply somewhere which might at any time reach them covering their possible need.”

4. *Persistent cheerfulness*, “a core of impenetrable cheerfulness beneath a coat of purely linguistic grouching.”<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Chaplain T. E. Swann, in *The Churchman*.

<sup>38</sup> W. E. Hocking, “Religion in War-Time,” *Atlantic Monthly*.

5. *Straightforwardness*, not so much strict honesty as squareness and hatred of sham.

6. *Humility*, compatible with great boastfulness as regards the unit.

7. *Loyalty*, especially to the unit.

8. *Devotion* to home and mother.

"The word home stands for another great spiritual reality to the soldier. In trying hours his family ties have taken on a new strength and been invested with a new preciousness. Memories of home, the consciousness of bonds of affection that link him to members of his family, this sense of family interdependence with its fears as well as its hopes, mean more to the average soldier than either patriotism or religion. To speak of home to the soldier is to be assured of an immediate response. Over and over again I have seen the eyes of soldiers in hospitals brim over and their faces glow with smiles of delight and pride when I have spoken to them of parents, wife and children. Family photographs are erected into shrines of worship at the bedside of the wounded. Letters come like answers to prayer. It is in what his home means to him that the soldier finds the chief sources of the fountain at which his spirit is renewed."<sup>39</sup>

"I have a feeling that the influence of the home upon the soldier has not been sufficiently stressed. It was his sheet anchor, and the powerful magnet which irresistibly drew him back to his native land. It would be safe to say that as an influence it affected the life and purpose of the average soldier more than the Church. In the home the mother was the central figure."

"The qualities generally hated indicate the same standard: Cowardice, closefistedness, snobbishness, swell-headedness, hypocrisy, disloyalty, meanness."

The chaplains would not claim that all men had these qualities or that men carried them out in all their implications. What they do claim is that these are virtues which the average American man admires in others.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Chaplain J. S. Dancey, in *The Northwestern Christian Advocate*.

<sup>40</sup> "Somewhere in the list ought to be put a virtue which soldiers especially praise in their officers and try to copy in themselves, namely, getting things done, no matter how. It is of the nature of persistency, of single-mindedness."



They constitute his moral ideal. And average men in great numbers, met by the demands of army life and war, showed that they had the elements of these virtues in their own make-up. The war did not produce these virtues—it simply *revealed* them to us as never before.

Any attempt to account for these virtues decisively is rather futile. To call them "Christian" may readily mislead. All would probably agree that though "there is little conscious and articulate Christianity at the front, yet there are profoundly Christian characteristics in what men are and do and endure, who have never known or do not understand or have forgotten the Christian religion."<sup>41</sup> These are virtues which Christ approved and exalted and lived. If men do not know that these are Christian virtues it is a tragedy, and a 'judgment' upon us in the Church. "But from a generalization which is concerned with the basis of the character of the majority, conscious Christianity must, however regretfully, be left almost entirely out of account."<sup>42</sup> Some will see in that character the influence of Christian homes, and of a consciously Christian environment. Others will explain it as the product of military training. Still others will see in it an expression of that "Light which lighteth every man coming into the world." To disentangle the strands of Christian influence, military training, and original human nature is an impossible task. The important fact for the Church is that under the conditions of war men showed the elements of great Christian virtues, though not motivated by any conscious allegiance to Christ.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> N. S. Talbot, "Thoughts on Religion at the Front."

<sup>42</sup> G. Gordon, "Papers from Picardy."

<sup>43</sup> "We may dare to say that we have been allowed to see the radiant outshining of that 'Light which lighteth every man coming into the world' in the almost universal unselfishness, the ready eagerness to sacrifice self, the amazing spirit of cheerful endurance of hardship under every conceivable circumstance of trial which has characterized the bearing of men of all ranks in the Army and Navy. The quality of the material is indeed magnificent beyond words. Still it remains true that of religion as a life of conscious union with God they know little or nothing." (Report on Chaplains' Replies to Lord Bishop of Kensington.)

"There are in them excellences and simple heroisms which make it plain that Christianity is no artificial thing superimposed on human nature, but is the laying bare and setting free of its inmost native quality." Neville S. Talbot.

VICES OR MORAL WEAKNESSES FREQUENTLY  
FOUND AND LARGELY CONDONED

The same caution that needs to be observed in judging the moral virtues of the average man in civil life by the character he showed in war must be applied to his vices and moral weaknesses. The form and extent they assumed in the army were often the result of abnormal conditions. A discussion of the effect of the war and military training on moral standards and life will be found in Section II of this report. This section is concerned not with the effect of the war but with what contact with the army revealed concerning the moral weaknesses of an average group of American men.

As to the vices and moral weaknesses found in the army there is very general agreement. The differences of opinion are as to the actual extent and seriousness of certain of them. The following reports are typical:

"The obvious weaknesses are foul talk, swearing, gambling, drinking, and immorality. Fundamentally their weaknesses are those that come from immature character. They still impulsively respond to immediate environment. They don't dominate or control. The present bulks large and often makes them forget those distant things which down in their hearts they know are best."

"The sins which a soldier spurns are not wine, women, cards, and cursing."

"We've been criticized as an army as being smokers, swearers, and gamblers. There is truth in it. Nearly all our men did all of these things."

"As regards the general moral tone of the officers and men of the A. E. F.—much profanity and an interesting frankness in regard to sex cohabitation."

"I have found that the moral standards of the strong-minded, capable old army non-commissioned officer are the standards that tend more and more to prevail. The old sergeant has very liberal and tolerant views on drinking, gambling, profanity, vulgarity in speech, non-church attendance, association with prostitutes, and so on. If he does condemn any of these practices he con-

demns them on the ground that they are foolish, not that they are wrong."

"We've had six Y. M. C. A. preachers here in the last two weeks," one of the men said to me. "They've been joy-riding up and down the lines, preaching to us about the dangers of booze, women, and gambling. And it's the holy truth, Judge, we're so sore than every one of us is feeling like having a hell of a time with all three the first leave we get."<sup>44</sup>

"They have very lax ideas about drunkenness and sexual irregularity, but they have very strict ideas about the sacredness of social obligations within the groups to which they belong. I would mention sheer fear of public opinion as one of the great weaknesses of the men. They would rather be in fashion than be right."<sup>45</sup>

"They believe that morality is all right for those who can or care to live up to it, most of them feel that they can't and that it would spoil the fun of life if they could. They believe in being square, in telling the truth, and not cheating when they gamble; on the other hand, they believe in 'Good Business,' the essence of which as far as I can make out is not getting caught. They seem to have little conception of social justice or of morality in its larger sense. They have never heard of the British Labor Party's proposals. Social arrangements should be such that business will be prosperous."

In summary it may be said that impurity, obscene and profane language, and gambling appear in practically all reports. Petty stealing is frequently mentioned. Drunkenness, lack of moral courage, "looking out for number one," lack of social morality in the large sense, are occasionally set down.

*Sexual Immorality.* There are two groups of statistics to which one naturally turns for an index of the prevalence of sexual immorality—the venereal rate and the prophylaxis rate.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Judge Ben Lindsey, "Doughboy's Religion," *Cosmopolitan*.

<sup>45</sup> Sherwood Eddy, "With Our Soldiers in France."

<sup>46</sup> An interesting non-statistical estimate of the situation is reported by a member of the Committee. "One of our men in France throughout the war in a position which gave him special opportunity for observation, told me that he had checked his own observations by conferences with others and estimated that 20 per cent of our men in the army in France were incorruptible and 20 per cent more were utterly corrupt and that the 60 per cent

Since venereal diseases are "communicated for the most part by illicit sexual intercourse and chiefly by prostitution, their prevalence is a rough measure of the failure of education and other social influences to secure control of the sex impulse on the part of the male population."<sup>47</sup> But the venereal rate must be interpreted with considerable care. As Colonel Snow of the Medical Corps points out in his article on "Venereal Disease Control in the Army," "There has been much unintentional misinterpretation of the venereal disease figures of the army owing to a failure to understand the method through which the annual rate for a given week or month is obtained. All cases discovered and recorded for the first time in a given week are multiplied by 52, as an annual rate is desired instead of a weekly rate, and divided by the total number of men in thousands to obtain the rate per thousand. Thus if one man in a group of a thousand men was found to have venereal disease in a given week, the annual venereal rate per thousand would be 52 per thousand and it would be a grave error to quote the figures in such a way as to give the impression that 52 infected men had been discovered in a thousand in one week."<sup>48</sup> The figure 52 would merely indicate that at that rate—one case a week—52 cases of venereal disease would appear among a thousand men in a year. These figures may be read in such a way as to exaggerate the evil greatly.

On the other hand, the venereal rate in the army should not be taken as an adequate index of the extent of sexual immorality among young men in civil life. It is the result of a study of men living under extraordinary repressive and protective measures, and the number of cases appearing among a thousand men per year is probably less than they would show in civil life.

in between were amenable to the influences which drew them either way. I mentioned the estimate to a Canadian soldier and he said he would make the proportion 30-30."

<sup>47</sup> Surgeon General's Report, June 30, 1918.

<sup>48</sup> William F. Snow, M.D., "Venereal Disease Control in the Army."

The annual rate of admissions for venereal disease per thousand based on reports to the Surgeon General for the twelve-week period, September 21 to December 7, 1917, when large numbers of civilians were being inducted into service, was as follows:

Regular Army	88.0
National Guard	115.2
National Army	162.4
Average	121.9

"The National Army, more than either of the others, is a cross section of the physique and character of the men of this country."<sup>49</sup> In this typical cross section, at the rate above, 162 cases would appear in a year among a thousand men. Presumably the same men would not be liable to develop disease more than once in a year. The figures may therefore be interpreted as meaning that approximately 162 per thousand, or 16 per cent of draft men would be venereal at some time in a given year. It would not, however, be correct to infer that 162 *new* cases would appear in a thousand men every year; for we must not forget that these drafted men brought with them into the army an accumulation of venereal disease contracted during several years.

The United States Public Health Service has recently issued figures giving "The Percentage of Venereal Diseases among Approximately the Second Million Drafted Men—by Cities."<sup>50</sup> These figures are based on an examination upon arrival in mobilization camps, and include only obvious cases of syphilis, gonorrhea, and chancroid. They vary for the several cities listed from .82 per cent to 27.45 per cent of the men inducted into service, with 5.4 per cent as an average. The fact that these figures indicate the cases active at a given time rather than the proportion of cases developing in a year presumably accounts for their being so much lower than

<sup>49</sup> Rt. Rev. William Lawrence, "Venereal Disease in the Army, Navy, and Community."

<sup>50</sup> Issued by the Treasury Department. V. D. No. 47.

those referred to above. It has also to be borne in mind that these figures measure only the cases among the men who arrived at camps and take no account of men who had already been rejected by the local draft boards for various causes, including venereal diseases.

The venereal rate is a rough index of the situation, but is not the true thermometer of the moral situation in an army. "It may simply indicate scientific skill in evading the consequences of sexual looseness. The prophylactic rate in connection with the venereal rate is a truer gauge. The former indicates the men who did not escape physical penalties. The latter shows those who have been morally guilty and have had recourse to prophylaxis."<sup>51</sup>

However, the prophylactic rate as ordinarily reported is even more difficult to use as a gauge of the moral situation than the venereal rate. It is figured in the same way, by multiplying the weekly rate per thousand by 52 to secure an annual rate. But the possibility of frequent repetitions by an individual man enters in to confuse the problem. Thus it is theoretically conceivable that a single individual might receive a prophylaxis for every week in the year, thus bringing the rate per thousand up to 52. In the article by Colonel Snow, already referred to, several charts giving the annual prophylactic rate per thousand, based on the experience in camps in this country, are included. They show the rate occasionally rising to 600 and 800. Such records are vivid evidence of the effectiveness of prophylaxis in reducing disease and of educational repressive measures in reducing illicit sexual intercourse, but they give little information as to the proportions of immorality. Sixteen men out of a thousand receiving prophylaxis during a given week would raise the annual rate for that week above 800.

Mr. Raymond Fosdick has given figures on prophylaxis which show how widely the rate varied according

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<sup>51</sup> Chaplain Brent's Report to the Adjutant General.

to local conditions. "In one body of 7,401 troops belonging to various branches of the service, with an average of seven weeks in France, only 56 prophylactic treatments were given and only one case of venereal disease developed; during two months in France, one infantry regiment of 3,267 men had a record of only eleven prophylactic treatments and no new cases of disease."<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand the following figures on the situation in a base port, at a time when the houses of prostitution were running wide open and were frequented in large numbers by our troops, show a very different condition.

Month	Number of Troops	Prophylaxes	Disease Cases
August	4,571	1,669	72
September	9,471	3,392	124
October	3,966	2,074	67

Here again the cases of prophylaxis cannot be identified with the number of men receiving treatment; 2,074 prophylaxes do not equal 2,074 men. For example, 900 men of whom 300 received four prophylaxes a month, 300 received two prophylaxes a month, and 300 received one prophylaxis a month would account for 2,100 treatments. Nevertheless, such a prophylactic rate represents a very large amount of sexual immorality.

From such data as this it is clearly impossible to draw very accurate conclusions as to the moral situation. It appears that not less than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of men of draft age throughout the United States have venereal disease at a given time, that some 16 per cent are liable to be venereal at some time during a year, and that given a bad moral environment the number who succumb is very large.

To date it has not been possible to secure figures giving the actual proportions of men in a given number

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<sup>52</sup> From an article in *The New Republic*. The figures are given in support of the proposition that it is "possible for men living constantly together in large groups to be sexually continent and at the same time healthy and contented."

who received prophylaxis at some time during an extended period. Such figures would be the most accurate index of sexual immorality.

*Obscenity and Profanity.* Obscenity and profanity were very prevalent in the army. The following are fairly typical of replies received on this topic:

"Swearing has grown steadily worse and taken on an added picturesqueness as the days have gone by. One interesting observation is that where the officers have behaved like gentlemen and maintained obedience without cussing, the men have been quick to follow the fine example set by the officers. The stream of profanity in the average outfit is overwhelming. All attempt by chaplains and auxiliary agencies to stem the tide have met with little success."

"Obscenity has been such that men have deliberately gone out from the barracks to escape it. Conditions have varied in companies but in many places the self-respecting have a terrible struggle to keep their ideals."

"They hear and use a lot of rough, profane, unmoral language. They jest about things that are unclean and sacred. They tell smutty stories and sing ribald songs."

*Gambling.* Gambling was very general both among officers and men, for large stakes and small, in home camps, S. O. S., and on shipboard. "One must say with great regret that gambling was the prevailing vice of officers in virtually every group touched. No one thing has been more commented upon regarding the evils of official life in the A. E. F. than this."

*Drunkenness.* Drunkenness was rare in the army by necessity and as a result little moral significance can be given to any report upon it. Liquor was practically not available in the home camps and in many locations in France. Where it was easily procured, especially in conjunction with much idleness, as after the armistice, there was occasionally and locally considerable drunkenness. It is fair to say that drunkenness is one of the moral weaknesses which men do not consider very bad.



These are vices or moral weaknesses which average men readily condone in the army and probably condone in civil life. To condone does not mean to approve. They are not part of the average man's ideal of life. He does not out and out believe in them. But they are not so very bad, he thinks, at least not so wrong as the parsons think.<sup>53</sup>

It is encouraging that from an intimate contact with these average men with their mingled virtues and vices so many have come to a renewed faith in human nature and its possibilities.

"From that area, in which the most foolish and wicked of all man's activities was in full swing, I yet brought back a new faith in human nature."

"It is not that the war has failed to produce heroes, so much as that it has produced heroism in a torrent. The great man of the war is the common man. It becomes ridiculous to pick out particular names. The acts of the multitudinous heroes forbid the setting up of effigies. When I was a young man I imitated Swift and posed for cynicism. I will confess that now at fifty, and greatly helped by this war, I have fallen in love with mankind."<sup>54</sup>

"In crises the rich man, the poor man, the thief, the harlot, the preacher, the teacher, the laborer, the ignorant, the wise, all go to death for something that defies death—something immortal in the human spirit. Those truck-drivers, those mule-whackers, those common soldiers,

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<sup>53</sup> Norman MacLean makes a comment which is of great interest in this connection. Probably it would apply equally well to the American army.

"A curious fact is the lofty standard in the direction of self-control which they demand from chaplains. The most typical 'old soldier,' with a possibly highly colored record, will become a severe critic of a padre who fails to set an example in these matters. An acute observer remarked that this universal attitude is due to an appreciation of *métier*. A soldier's business is to be brave; a solicitor's to be trustworthy; and a clergyman's to be good. And inasmuch as self-mastery is an essential element in goodness, it is demanded of the chaplain. The fact of the demand indicates the depth of the appreciation that goodness is not achieved without this faculty. Perhaps, too, their wistful desire to achieve it for themselves makes them demand that the official representatives of religion shall prove in practice that its achievement is possible. A failure by the chaplains may do something to dim a half-understood hope. However, the fact is there; and from it we may at least infer that the standards of private life, common to all branches of the Church, and to all Christian times, will not be deposed, as ideals, by the men who bear arms."

"Men expect you to set an example; they want you to be different from them but they don't want you to think that you are." (Bishop Brent's Report as Senior Chaplain.)

<sup>54</sup> H. G. Wells.

that doctor, these college men on the ambulance are brothers in the democracy of courage."<sup>55</sup>

"So heart-breaking and yet so inspiring has been this massive heroism of the common rank and file of men, that one does not wonder that it has begotten a new religious faith and led one like H. G. Wells to say on the one hand, 'Our sons have shown us God,' and Dr. T. P. Forsyth on the other hand, 'God has shown us our sons.' "<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> William Allen White.

<sup>56</sup> Henry Churchill King, "For a New America in a New World."

## SUMMARY OF PART I

Let us now attempt a brief gathering up of what we have learned concerning the state of religion in the United States from our investigation of that cross section of American male humanity that we called the army. But let us at the same time remember that for a large part of our data any definite generalization is impossible.

1. The number of men in the army who expressed themselves as having no religious faith was negligible. The great majority of men were nominally Christians and a large proportion had some Church connection. But the number who were conscious Christians and in active, vital connection with the Church was relatively small.

2. Probably the most outstanding fact that emerges from our investigation is the widespread ignorance as to the meaning of Christianity and misunderstanding of the fundamentals of Christian faith and life—and that not only among men outside the Church but also among those nominally in its membership. It is evident that the Church has seriously failed as a teacher of religion.

3. Although the great majority of men were not consciously Christians and not in vital connection with the Church there is abundant evidence that there were thousands who were motivated by loyalty to Christ, who had a definite relationship to the Church and who bore unmistakable witness to the reality and power of the Christian faith.

4. The consciousness of denominational differences among Protestant laymen was very slight. The characteristic attitude was not so much one of conscious criticism of denominational lines as of indifference to them

and practical ignoring of them. There was very little demand for distinctively denominational ministrations or services.

5. Criticisms of the Church for inadequacy in its moral life were fairly common along the following lines: that the salvation preached by the Churches is narrowly selfish, that Christianity is presented as a collection of "don'ts," that even if the moral standards of the Church are right its members are not particularly distinguishable for their all-round goodness, that the Church does not manifest the spirit of brotherhood of which it talks.

6. The Church was also criticized on the ground of the unreality or triviality of its work along the following lines: that it is concerned about things far removed from the real business of life, that it emphasizes unimportant matters such as services and ritual, that its "doings" seem trivial or routine.

7. The great majority of men have some religious ideas, but they are dim and vague. Here it is particularly difficult to generalize but the following tendencies seem to be fairly clear:

(a) Religion is regarded as primarily a matter of deeds rather than of belief or worship.

(b) There is almost universally a belief in God and in immortality but neither conception has definitely Christian content. It is a vague notion of the general beneficence of the universe rather than faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(c) So far as men think of Christ it is with feelings of respect, but to great numbers He is only a dim figure of the past far removed from their present interests and needs.

(d) The sense of sinfulness and of need of "salvation" is relatively infrequent.

8. The general effect of contact with the men, with

their mingled virtues and moral weaknesses, has been to renew faith in the possibilities of human nature.

(a) Under the stress of war men showed the elements of great Christian virtues, even though not largely motivated by conscious allegiance to Christ. The following virtues were generally admired and widely found: courage, unselfishness, generosity, straightforwardness, humility, loyalty, devotion to home and mother.

(b) The following vices were widely found and largely condoned: sexual immorality, profanity, obscenity, and gambling.

The effect of military training and war upon religion will be considered in subsequent chapters of this volume.



PART II

THE EFFECT OF THE WAR ON  
RELIGION IN THE ARMY





## INTRODUCTION

The question as to the *effect* of the war on the religious life of men in the army has certainly received much more emphasis in current discussions than the *disclosure* that the war has made as to the religious life and thought of the average man. It is a subject that arouses greater curiosity. But it is not true that this wider interest necessarily indicates a greater importance. What we are able to learn concerning the state of religion among the men inducted into the service has much more to teach us as to what the Church should do than the changes which may have been worked in some of them by war or military training. In so far as the conclusions of Part I are sound they are suggestive of the religious situation among the mass of American men. The direct effects of army life and war were confined to the four million odd who were in service, and any radical changes to only a part of them.<sup>1</sup>

It is natural that the attempt to determine the effects of army life upon religion should call forth great differences of opinion, for the effects varied according to the different areas in which the men were distributed. There were four main areas into which the army carried men: (1) the home training camps in this country; (2) the back areas or Service of Supply in France; (3) the combat areas or Zone of Advance in France; (4) the hospitals. It is worth while to recall the main influences

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<sup>1</sup> "In the calculation of future tendencies in the social, political, or religious spheres after the war, it is the easiest thing in the world to forget that 'when the boys come home' it is only a bare majority of them to whom most of what we have been saying will apply. . . . The war has brought, broadly speaking, only two influences to bear on the *whole* soldier manhood of our country: (a) the demand for self-sacrifice in a righteous cause; (b) Army life and discipline." T. W. Pym, "Papers from Picardy."

that were brought to bear on the men within these various areas.

1. *The Home Training Camps.*

a. Separation from home, depending of course on distance.

b. A sudden break with the habits, associations and occupations of civil life.

c. An exclusively male community, cf. school or college.

d. Lack of privacy.

e. Military discipline and instruction.

f. The expectation of active service.

g. A large measure of protective and recreational work.

h. Active religious work by welfare agencies, camp pastors, and chaplains.

2. *The Service of Supply in France.*

a. A more complete separation from home.

b. Foreign environment, customs, standards.

c, d, e. As above.

f. Frequently no great risk or expectation of active service and generally monotonous tasks.

g. Much less protective and recreational work.

h. Frequently less favorable physical conditions.

i. Less religious work.

3. *Zone of Advance.*

a. Prevalence of danger and death.

b. Mental and physical discomfort and suffering.

c. Excitation of combat.

d. Weariness.

e. Experience of mutual dependence and physical helplessness.

f. Chaplains. The chaplain became increasingly prominent, and his religious function stood out more clearly in combat areas and hospitals.

4. *Hospitals.*

- a. Physical "let-down" of sickness and rest.
- b. Quietness and the opportunity for reflection.
- c. Women.
- d. Prevalence of suffering and death.
- e. Chaplains.

In addition to these main influences there were many purely local conditions that did much to determine the effect—e.g., the character and standards of commanding officers, the caliber of the chaplain and local welfare workers, the predominant tone of the men, the moral environment of the community. Add to this the fact that conditions were very different before and after the armistice, with the complete shift of interests and the increase of idleness and restlessness, and it is easy to realize that all ready generalization as to the religious effect of the war on men in general is quite impossible. In considering any reported change all these factors have to be taken into account.

The following quotations from chaplains will emphasize the importance of bearing these diverse conditions in mind:

"The changes made by the war vary according to location. The boys who remained in the camps in the States suffered separation from home and relatives; those who came across the seas and remained in the Service of Supply had added to this experience that of touch with a strange people with strange customs in a strange land; while the lads who were at the battle front had added experiences which registered intenser reactions."

"At the front, there is a certain moral excitation. Even if it is not religious in its accent, it has carrying power which takes many a man over rough places and affords a point of contact on which the chaplain may stress his message. He will rarely find this note in a Base Section. It is in the Service of Supply, however, that most of the A. E. F. are doing their work. The Service, for the majority of the men, is humdrum and uninteresting.

The conditions under which officers and men are working are abnormal. There is little of the appeal to ideals and even decencies which comes with family life and home conditions."<sup>2</sup>

"It may have been true, as many observers have said, that during the war the soldier was unselfish and generous. But certainly after the armistice—which is the only period I know anything about—nothing of the sort was true of the men with whom I was stationed in France."

With these considerations in mind we take up the various effects of the war on religion as discussed in the reports that have come to us. It is convenient to deal with them under three headings:

The Effect of the War on Personal Religion—Faith and Practice.

The Effect on the Church and Churchmanship.

The Effect on Moral Life and Standards.

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<sup>2</sup> Chaplain Brent's Report to the Adjutant General.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EFFECT OF MILITARY TRAINING AND WAR ON PERSONAL RELIGION

In view of the diversity of conditions and the conflict of reports it would be futile and premature to attempt any statement as to whether the total effect on personal religion has been favorable or unfavorable. We do not know. The witnesses differ very widely in their judgment. A considerable group believe that considering the men as a whole there has been no great change in either direction. The following are typical of such an opinion:

"I confess I cannot see the change some men say they see."

"The answers [to a questionnaire sent to pastors in Bloomington inquiring about the returned soldiers] were unanimous in the belief that the men were not much changed."<sup>3</sup>

"The fifth question in a questionnaire distributed among officers was, 'Does army life make you more religious or less?' Out of the fifty-six questionnaires filled out, thirty-five left this question unanswered. Eleven said, 'Neither.' Six thought it made them more religious and four thought it made them less so. It is a fair presumption to believe that the thirty-five who failed to answer this question did not recognize any definite change in their religious life due to army conditions."<sup>4</sup>

"The religious condition of the men in the line was just the same as one finds it at home,—with the veneering taken off."

"Do not think that the war had very much effect on the religious life of the men generally."

"On the whole men are going to be less markedly different after a few months in France than most people

<sup>3</sup> Edgar D. Jones, in *The Christian Century*.

<sup>4</sup> Edwin A. McAlpin, Jr., in *The Presbyterian Advance*.

think. There are very few people upon whom the war has had a revolutionary effect."

"So far as religion is concerned there is little change. Those who were religious before the war are the ones who are now of that type. Those who were not are not now. Of course, for both of these classes some men have been chosen."

Of those who believe the total effect of army life to have been conducive to religion the following are representative:

"In reference to personal religious experience, all except one thought it had been deepened and made more real by war, and all feel that soldiers will go back stronger men and more valuable to the community for high ends. Some confessed a lapse into a lower plane of living."<sup>5</sup>

"I think there has been a deepening of religious experience as they have been brought face to face with the most serious issues of life."

"If that be the heart and essence of religion, then without any hesitation whatever, I would say that our men by thousands and tens of thousands have found religion. They have been answering with the best they had to the voice of the best they knew."

"After having eaten with these men, marched with them, lived with them for eighteen months, under conditions which they hated, in circumstances which they loathed, I believe that the majority of them are spiritually better men than when they came over."

On the other hand there are many views such as these:

"More have fallen from their ideal than have risen to a higher level."

"War itself has never made men religious and never will. Some who had religion will have lost it, and a very few may have found it."

"While the good effects of a war are seen more clearly after it is over, certainly during the war the vast majority of men at the front would almost unanimously agree that the preponderatory influence and effect for the time being is evil."<sup>6</sup>

"Here and there one has had a spiritual life deepened

<sup>5</sup> Report on Conference of sixty-five enlisted men in "Y" hut overseas.

<sup>6</sup> Sherwood Eddy, "With Our Soldiers in France."

by what he has seen and experienced but the great majority have felt the awful blight and deterioration of war."

"The majority of officers and men have suffered incalculable spiritual loss during these terrible months. Religion was for the time being quite neglected if not forgotten. As for prayers and devotion—well it is easy to build up an ideal story on the basis of a few isolated cases. Back in the S. O. S. the same was true to a less degree. There temptations were multiplied and many men threw away former restraints. Religion had more chance to assert itself, but there also religion suffered. The tendency was to lose ground."

Manifestly we have no scale of values by which to weigh the results. How would we weigh a momentary and thrilling experience of dependence on God against a breakdown of normal religious habits? How balance a perhaps temporary increase in certain types of unselfishness against a perhaps temporary increase in sexual immorality? Which is to count for more, an intense spiritual experience among a few or a general hardening of the sensibilities of many, a freshened assurance of immortality or a lessened sense of fundamental moral alternatives? If one says that the war fostered or hindered religion, it is necessary to ask what phase of religion he means, in which circumstances of war it was true, and what remains after these peculiar circumstances have ceased to exist.

#### GENERAL EFFECT ON INTEREST IN RELIGION

Whatever may be our judgment as to the total effect of the war on the religion of men in the army it is certainly true that in all the military areas there were situations or occasions which "made men think"—not think through, but question. This was particularly true at the times of crisis such as enlistment, call, embarkation, advance to the front, preparation for attack, and being wounded. No doubt the routine of army life is in the main deadening to serious reflection. But certain occa-

sions are stimulating. Any sudden change of life or breakdown of the accustomed tends to make the more thoughtful reconsider. It becomes less easy to take life and its routine for granted.

"There are men, and I believe not a few, in whom the doing of this one deed [enlistment] deflects the whole balance of existence into generous and devoted ways. An abrupt release from self-absorption has for most human beings the force of a discovery."<sup>7</sup>

The period of adjustment at least stirs questions in many minds and the expectation and prevalence of death naturally stir men to a hasty review of their own lives.

"Death is a great teacher; from him men learn what are the things they really value."<sup>8</sup>

The fundamental questions come to the surface. And in so far as religion offers answers theoretical or practical to life's fundamental questions, some turning to religion must be expected. It is not uncommon for chaplains to report that they believe that many men are returning from active combat quickened in religious interest.

"The men who arrive from overseas seem generally to be in a more thoughtful frame of mind than a similar cross section of men from home."

This does not necessarily mean, however, that they are more religious, only more serious or thoughtful.

"Being serious and being religious are two very different qualities. One furnishes very splendid soil for the cultivation of the other: and good soil is primarily what the soldier is bringing back to America."<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps it cannot be safely asserted that the average soldier is returning a more serious man, but at any rate there were many occasions which made him temporarily more serious. In some places chaplains noted very distinct fluctuations of religious interest. One, writing of his experience in a home training camp, speaks of "the

<sup>7</sup> W. E. Hocking, in *Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Hankey, "Student in Arms."

<sup>9</sup> Orlo C. Brown, in *The Christian Advocate*.



distinct and unmistakable religious reactions which accompanied an overseas movement of the troops. I was stationed at Camp Merritt at the time with most favorable opportunities for contact with the men. Without exception I found them thinking deeply. They were not only open to approach, but invited and sought religious instruction and help. Equally as obvious is the unmistakable subsidence of the tide of religious interest since the cessation of hostilities."

In addition to these occasional stirrings of the religious interest, many men in the army came under the influence of religious workers. The same publicity which undoubtedly militated against religion in other directions made it a public function. Services were held in the local club (*i.e.*, the "Y") or in the village square or in the hospital ward. The chaplain was not only a religious worker but an official of the organization to which every man belonged. The Y. M. C. A. both by necessity and by intention often combined religious appeal with recreation or entertainment.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the total effect may have been, it is unquestionably true that many men were "exposed" to religious ideas and religious conviction who had been long out of reach of them.

"The soldier had religion thrust upon his attention in all kinds of ways and by agencies too numerous and well-known to catalogue." "The regular chaplain's services brought many 'to church' who had not been in the habit of going and I believe there was some thinking stimulated in the minds of the men."

One needs no reports from chaplains to know that under such conditions many men whose faith was latent or untried found a more conscious and active faith. It is analogous to the heightening of physical life in the face of danger or unusual effort. War called for self-control, disinterestedness, self-surrender, trust, faith;

<sup>10</sup> "The Triangle Team was advertised not to do evangelistic work as it is usually called, but to give the men a jolly song hour followed by a straight talk on subjects that would interest them."

and where men had been trained to look for these things in religion, they naturally looked more earnestly. "In a large number of cases, religion has become a more real concern of life, and personal faith has been deepened and strengthened."

"I have seen in these weeks at least one hundred men whose faces beamed with the joy of a new found faith and whose words testified to their awakened knowledge of the love of God."

Beyond this heightening of religious life among many of that minority who went into war definitely religious, there was undoubtedly in home camps and hospitals and leave-areas a considerable body of formal new decisions or conversions. Dr. Kelman, in his Yale Lectures on Preaching, speaking of his experiences with British troops, said there were many instances of a sharply defined experience of conversion and went on to say, "These, I think, were for the most part connected with sudden reversions to the religious experiences of childhood." The same would probably hold for our own forces; but it must be remembered that "many instances" does not mean overwhelming numbers.

Of course, we have reports which deal in large figures. One Y. M. C. A. worker, speaking of an evangelistic tour, writes: "Tens of thousands of men dedicated themselves to God in this open manner in the presence of their comrades. Afterwards very many signed the war roll cards, pledging allegiance to Christ." The words which he called upon the men to utter were these: "I hereby dedicate my manhood to God and to country and to home. May God help me to keep my vow." Sherwood Eddy describes an evangelistic meeting of the type common in the camps both in this country and in France:

"We have had them forty minutes now and many a man is listening as for his life. We hold up the pledge card of the war roll. How many of you are willing to take your stand against drink, gambling, and impurity?

To break away from sin and to sign the war roll which says "I pledge my allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and King, by God's help to fight his battles and bring victory to his kingdom"? Who will take his stand for Christ and sign tonight? Here and there all over the house men begin to rise. A hundred come forward to get cards and sign them."

A Methodist camp pastor writes: "A few nights ago I held a service in a 'Y' hut. It was packed with men. When I gave them an opportunity to decide for Christ, it was impossible to count the hands that went up." An account in *The Standard* of the experience of two Baptist preachers in France says, "At one of these great meetings nearly a thousand men declared their acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour."

Clearly, however, the raising of the hand, or even the signing of a pledge card, cannot be identified with anything so fundamental or original as conversion. It may safely be said that a very large number of the men thus expressing themselves were already definitely affiliated with some branch of the Church. And anyone familiar with evangelistic work realizes that it is often easier for a man to raise his hand or give his assent than not to. Some of the pledges taken, such as the first mentioned above, were closely associated with a general vow of loyalty to home and country. As to the value of such results sincere Christians will inevitably differ, according as they belong to those branches of the Church which believe in the great value of open and reiterated decision or to those which believe that such expression tends to exhaust the religious impulses and deflect energy from progressive Christian nurture. There is obviously no way of discovering what proportion of such decisions were new or how fundamental they were. Whether we take such incidents as evidence of a "revival" in the army will depend on what we mean. A writer in a church paper, arguing against Dr. Fosdick's statement in the *Atlantic Monthly* that there was not a revival of reli-

gion at the front, says: "Parents and pastors have enough testimonial letters in their possession and a sufficient number of returned men are bearing witness to their discovery of God, to constitute a fairly large sized revival result." But we believe that chaplains in the main would agree that there was no large accession to the ranks of definite Christianity and no wholesale mass movement toward religion.

Such decisions as were made or renewed, at least under the guidance of the Y. M. C. A. appeal, took the form in the main of a renunciation of certain vices, such as gambling, drinking, and impurity, and a new resolution to make Christ the authority in their lives, and serve the cause they were fighting for as His.

The formal new decisions made under the influence or guidance of religious workers were mainly confined to the home camps, the hospitals, and the back areas in France, where active religious work was practicable. In the Zone of Advance and perhaps to some extent in other areas at times of crisis there were many new resolutions. "This sector [the Z. of A.] was the place of vows and many new resolutions." Under the pressure of danger or in the relief of escape, men resolved henceforth to read their Bibles or say their prayers or "be good" or go to church. A captain writes in a letter to his mother: "A lot of us who have not been exactly angels before this affair have made certain resolves that are pretty sure to be kept." A hospital chaplain reports: "Every day I heard some such statement as this: 'I have never had much to do with religion, but I'm going to have something to do with it from now on.'" It would, however, be an optimist who would expect any very large direct gain from such resolutions. Unquestionably, there were some that were deep and will bear fruit. But "many men who were ready to reveal deep conviction and faith while they were in bed and separated from companionship quickly returned to a hard and indifferent exterior

when they were well enough to mingle with other soldiers. These and other things constantly raised a question as to how far the good influences and good intentions which came out under army conditions and in suffering would survive when they went back to old surroundings." The same observation and the same questions apply also to the difference between the combat and the leave areas.<sup>11</sup>

In the deepened religious life of a few, in the new resolutions made by many men and carried back to America by some, a good many chaplains find much encouragement. And it cannot be said that in the reports received there is much evidence of clear and unmistakable loss. A British chaplain says that he heard many times in substance the following bitter caricature of the creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and the trench mortar has just blown my pal, who was a clean-living lad, to pieces; and God is love, and they crucified the sergeant major; and peace on earth, good will towards men, and I stuck my bayonet through his body; and Jesus died to save us from sin, and the Boche has been raping women; and this war never ends." Few reports of this type of development among American troops have come to our attention. Dr. E. D. Jones, in *The Christian Century*, tells of a soldier who, on being asked by a "Y" man to join a Bible class, replied: "Hell, no! that is, not now. The Bible teaches us to love our enemies; let's finish up this killing business before we take up Bible study again." Another worker quotes a private as saying, "There is no place for religion in the life of any soldier." And an officer said: "Of course the men are worse than when they came over. . . . After such training life is not held sacred. . . . Hell! How can you

<sup>11</sup> Cf. T. M. Pym, in "Papers from Picardy": "Close acquaintance with death has much to do with their attitude; escape suggests to the reflective mood regret for lost opportunities in the past—opportunities for good or evil. A man of one kind thanks God for deliverance and leaps at the fresh lease of life in which he may use such time as is left him in order to fit himself for service in this world and beyond. Another man merely laments that he has allowed himself so nearly to pass out with many of the 'joys of life' untasted, and determines to make up for lost time in his next leave or after the war."

kill a man saying to yourself, 'I love your soul'? All rot!" This attitude, however, is not commonly reported and can hardly be regarded as typical.

It would be reasonable to expect that men whose religion had been largely nominal—a routine of observance or a set of inherited explanations—would find in the face of war that the routine was ineffective and the explanations inadequate. And we would suppose that many men would feel a tremendous and unsettling conflict between the Christian view and way of life and the brutalities of war. But chaplains do not often speak of these as observed results.

What some chaplains and some men do feel very strongly is that combatant service produced a general dulling of sensibilities and lowering of standards which more than offset the religious gains. They say that it enforced such preoccupation with the elementary physical needs, was so raw and hard a life, as seriously to threaten the spirit. "Brutalized" is much too strong a word for anyone to use in describing the effect of combatant service on the majority of men. Its effect was not inevitably nor universally bad. But the easiest way for many men to meet its brutalities and coarseness was by a quiet "hardening" of the heart and a relaxing of former standards of daily life.

#### THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD AT THE FRONT

Many chaplains believe that the experiences of the front lines brought many men to a more vivid sense of the need and reality of God. There has doubtless been exaggeration in the reporting or phrasing of this fact but the testimony remains. To say that there were no atheists at the front is manifestly overshooting the mark. To say that the front was a place where atheism kept quiet, where there was little satisfaction in unbelief, where men wanted to believe, would be nearer the truth. Such a remark as "If a man was not a Christian when

he went over the top he would be before he came back," is hardly a commendation of Christianity. And such remarks as these, made after a remarkable escape, "The Old Man must have been with me then," and, "I sure did love the Lord then," do not have the ring of authentic religious experience. But allowing for the exaggeration of enthusiasm there remain the repeated assertions of many chaplains.

"God's presence has become a fact of experience with many of the men who have been in action."

"Interest has been intensified in a real God."

"A large number admit a more earnest faith in God."

"It is a saying at the front that the only soldier who doesn't believe in God is the one who has never been under shell fire or bombs."

"A few undoubtedly have been brought closer to God as a result of their experiences."

In the stress of battle men have approached God mainly as Companion and Protector. The thought of Him as Judge or Saviour does not appear to have been emphasized. It was in their loneliness and entire dependence that men sought Him and found Him. "It is noteworthy that alike among the men at sea and at the front religious feeling is said to take the form not so much of desire for salvation as for companionship."<sup>12</sup> "There are moments when a touch of searching fear reminds one of the loneliness of every personal self in that vast mill of misery and death and one achieves the denial that this apparent loneliness is real, because existence itself is a companionship with an unseen but inescapable will."<sup>13</sup>

It is some such moment as that which a chaplain describes:

"He was with a well-known artillery regiment in the Château-Thierry battle. A certain battery occupied a position exposed to the fiercest fire of the Boche. At one time the C. O. had to send a message to another battery posted on an adjoining hill, and called one of the lieu-

<sup>12</sup> Archbishops' Third Committee of Inquiry.

<sup>13</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," in *Atlantic Monthly*.

tenants to go and straighten out a mix-up that had occurred. The lieutenant told the chaplain about it next day, saying: "When I looked down that valley it didn't seem possible to get through. Shells were bursting so fast that the whole valley seemed to be on fire, and it looked as if every foot of it was being covered. Well, as I started down, I suddenly thought of some words which I had heard you read at a funeral the day before, and which had impressed me at the time, and as I walked along, I said—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me"; and I felt better. I kept saying those words over to myself until I got back. That's twice I've prayed and if a man can pray when he's in danger, he can pray when he's not. I'm going to be a good sport and begin to say my prayers.'"<sup>14</sup>

There is no question but that the more common approach to God stimulated by battle was through the experience of physical dependence and the need for a Protector. "I fancy that most men in service take a dip at some time or other into piety of a very different sort—that of personal safety-seeking. Prayer for most men in peril becomes an instinctive petition for personal deliverance."<sup>15</sup> That there was a great deal of prayer of a sort at the front appears to be certain:

"I have yet to meet the man who does not admit that under fire he prayed simply because he could not help it."

"Certainly there was much prayer in the trenches."

"As to praying among the soldiers, I saw only one fellow praying on his knees in the whole year I have been in the army, but when we go up to the front everybody prays to himself." (An enlisted man.)

"Most of them prayed before going over the top. Most of them had not prayed before since they were little children."

"If ever I prayed in my life I did when I went over the top." (An enlisted man.)

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Chaplain Tiplady's story of a young British soldier who, when cut off and compelled to wait for five hours in a shell hole for darkness and the opportunity to crawl back to his regiment, read Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven" and in the assurance of God's presence found comfort and strength.

<sup>15</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," in *Atlantic Monthly*.



"I'm not much on religion as they preach it, but any man who says he did not pray at the front is lying." (A captain.)

"I never offered up a prayer at night at all until I went up into the battle area, but there, I can tell you, I prayed with a vengeance." (An officer.)<sup>16</sup>

That a very large part of this praying was stimulated by fear and took the form of petitions for physical protection is equally certain. But it would be untrue to say that all the praying was of this sort. Men prayed also for courage and for friends and for victory. "I would like to be a Christian," said a man to a chaplain, "for I have learned that I am a coward." "For the first time perhaps in his life the sense of human dependence had dawned on him. He had never felt any need before that his pay check did not seem to cover or would not have seemed to cover if it had been large enough. Now he found himself in a world that necessitated a new sort of power to meet his needs. There must be someone to whom he could commit his friends at home, to whom he could trust himself, and upon whom he could lean should he pass into the unknown."<sup>17</sup> Even the cruder prayers for physical protection were not without other elements. There was penitence in some, as in the case of the captain who reported his prayer to a chaplain: "I have done many things I am ashamed of, but please God, give me another chance." There was resolution in some of them, such as that of the young Jew who said to his chaplain: "When I was at the front I promised God to cut out everything if he would save me from shells." Then he added with a laugh, "But all them things is vanished now."

For the emergency religion of the trenches few will have any great admiration. It is a pity that some in their

<sup>16</sup> If one exception is necessary to qualify some of the more inclusive generalizations, here it is. A marine was asked what his thoughts were when he got up into danger. "I had no religious idea at all," he said. "The one thing that kept saying itself over and over again was this: I have ten thousand dollars insurance, I have ten thousand dollars insurance, I have ten thousand dollars insurance, it don't make any difference."

<sup>17</sup> Chaplain Dancy, in *Northwestern Christian Advocate*.

eagerness to have religion thrive have not been very particular as to what sort this religion should be. But such religion does not thrive for long. "Many have 'developed' religion through the persuasion of a barrage, but most of these have had time to 'recover' and are now their normal selves again."

Professor Macintosh's comment, based on the observation of British troops, should be sufficient to moderate any too great enthusiasm over trench religion:

"Much the same thing may be said of trench religion as is notoriously true of 'death-bed' repentance. It sometimes has a discernibly permanent effect, but speaking generally, it tends to disappear when the danger is over. It is a well known fact that when the troops are expecting, in the course of a few hours, to go into action, it is not a difficult thing to get them almost to a man to partake of the sacraments of the Church. But the writer can say from his own observation in a camp made up of veterans who have been for some months—in hospital, convalescent home and command depot—away from the front lines, that the number of men remaining for the communion service after church-parade was commonly not more than from 2 to 5 per cent of the total number present. And this characteristically frank confession was made by an officer: 'When I was in the trenches I prayed like a good one; but a week later, when I was back in the billets, I didn't care a damn for religion.'"<sup>18</sup>

Granted that this emergency religion of the front lines was in the main an occasional and temporary thing, what have we as a result of it?

There are unquestionably some few men returning with a confirmed belief that by prayer they were spared from death and were the objects of a special divine protection. Sherwood Eddy gives a typical account of such an experience as told him by a soldier:

"No sooner had I done this than Fritz started to bombard. One shell fell in the hole in which I was, but exploded in the opposite direction. Then another came and

<sup>18</sup> Douglas C. Macintosh in "God in a World at War."

landed just above my head, but it failed to go off. Had it gone off I never would have been here now. I had prayed hard to God to deliver me from my enemies and when these things happened I felt my prayer was heard and that I was going to come through."<sup>19</sup>

A writer in *The Standard* gives a similar case as described by a soldier:

"There were hardly ten minutes of the day that the Huns weren't shelling, the shrapnel and leaves falling like rain around our heads; we had no protection whatever, had to dig a little hole of any kind just for the present to make a little shelter from the shell fire, and believe me, it was right there in one of these shell holes that I found my God, and I know that if I hadn't found him I would not be writing this to you now, but he watched over me and I didn't get even so much as a scratch."<sup>20</sup>

And a chaplain tells of six men who sought refuge in a shell hole:

"For nearly an hour these men were held in this place and were praying that God would spare their lives. Not a man was injured."

The man who prayed and was not hit has come back to give his testimony. The man who prayed and was hit is not here to tell his tale. But his comrades will tell it for him. We do not happen to have the American equivalents but the British chaplains were frequently faced with the case of "Bill who did pray" but yet had "his head blown off." A. H. Gray was reminded of the case of "Bob, the best man in our platoon, a man who said his prayers night and morning, a real Christian if ever there was one, and he was held up in the German wire and fairly riddled with bullets." And the chaplain's comment follows:

"To teach a man that God will be with him even in the hour of death, and that beyond death there is nothing to fear, is to give him a faith adequate to the terror of

<sup>19</sup> Sherwood Eddy, "With Our Soldiers in France."

<sup>20</sup> F. E. R. Miller, in *The Standard*.

life at the front. But to leave him with the Old Testament belief in the material salvation of the godly man is simply to mislead him and prepare him for real trouble."<sup>21</sup>

As a matter of fact it is a very few who have returned with any such faith as this. Time and the harsh impartial experiences of war were against it. The best men of all ranks would have little to do with it. The thing to be feared is that some of these best men, witnessing it, have been confirmed in their opinion that Christianity is a religion of fear or selfishness.

It is not unreasonable to expect that some few men have returned with the vivid memory of times when the entire dependence of man on a power greater than man, the need and possibility of the companionship of God, and the care of One who knoweth even the sparrows when they fall, was keenly felt. The experiences may have been bound up with much that is crude and on the level with "natural" religion. But Professor Hocking's comment is worth recalling:

"An idea is not necessarily false because it is primitive. To discover for one's self whatever truth there is in the simpler phases of religion may be the best way to revitalize more adequate forms more conventionally held."<sup>22</sup>

### THE QUESTION OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

The problems connected with a Christian belief in God's providence have not been created but they have been very widely distributed by the experiences of war.

"We must not allow ourselves to imagine that our experiences of these past three years have created any new difficulty for Christianity. They have only diffused the knowledge of their existence and have given edge and point to them all."<sup>23</sup>

"Many men say that they don't see how an all-wise and all-powerful God could allow this war."

"The problem of evil is the one big intellectual difficulty

<sup>21</sup> A. H. Gray, "As Tommy Sees Us."

<sup>22</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time."

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

in men's minds. They are face to face with it all the time."

This situation must cause deep thoughtfulness and humility in the preachers of religion. In the days ahead many of their hearers will be men who have met the hardest facts of life—the extremes of suffering and malice, the pain of the innocent, the death of the faithful. It is safe to say that for many years to come the problem of evil will be before us in a much sharper form than before the war. If the view of life we preach cannot meet the facts of human suffering it will be condemned without pity or delay.<sup>24</sup>

### THE PREVALENCE OF FATALISM

It is generally acknowledged that some sort of fatalism was prevalent under combat conditions. The question is as to what sort it was and as to its religious significance. There are fairly distinct levels of fatalism or what might loosely be called fatalism. Men may discover very early that "there's no use of worrying," that it weakens and does not save. It is not credible for long at the front that a man can do much by prayer or otherwise to ward off wounds or death. His chances of life or death do not depend on him at any rate. The way to inner peace is to "take no thought for your life." When men go on from this to decide what does control the chances the answers may differ, Luck, Destiny, God. The vaguest and most noncommittal answer is, Luck. "If your luck's in, it's in; if it's out, it's out." The result becomes a matter of chances or is subject to a vague personal possession that a man may "have with him" or be "out of." In any case one would not rest very heavily upon it. It is quite an advance from this stage

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. the British Report, "The Army and Religion": "The brute facts which have wrought such confusion in the minds of the soldiers have come also with rude hands into the sanctuaries of their kindred. It has become evident that the faith which will command the future will be that which deals most adequately with the problem of evil."

to a developed fatalism, wherein the cards are all stacked, the results all foreordained, whether by Fate or God. Then men begin to say: "I'm not for it till one comes along with my number on it." Such fatalism is religious or not according as to whether the number is put on by God or Fate. In either case, if thoroughly believed, it will tend to make men reckless.

It is not possible to tell from the reports of chaplains just what the so-called fatalism in the American army amounted to. In the British army there appears to have been a good deal of the thoroughgoing sort. We are inclined to believe that in our own army, perhaps because of the shorter time of service, most men did not get far beyond the Luck stage. At least there is little evidence that men attained a fatalism which would cast all care or caution aside.

As to its religious significance men differ. One says: "In my opinion the common fatalism of the soldiers is the logical outgrowth of the teachings of the Church. War has emphasized man's weakness, the frailty of life, the certainty of death, and the dependence of the individual on God." But another asserts: "The fatalism of the soldier is, of course, not Christian at all. It is a pagan survival." The probabilities are that a fatalism as fluid as that in the army tended to take its color from the previous beliefs of the individual, being religious or not according as the man was religious or not.

There is no reason to expect that it will survive the war to any marked degree. It was mainly associated with battle wounds and death. It was relatively superficial, "a spiritual sedative," an attitude adopted as a protection against fear or anxiety.

#### INCREASED FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

It was entirely natural that war should bring to the men in the army a renewed interest in immortality. "Day by day there was held before them that oldest of

the world's old questions: If a man die shall he live again?" Such an added interest is reported. A lieutenant writes, "Here [in the Zone of Advance] men confess to a new sense of reality in things religious, saying it was the first appreciation they had for 'life after death.' " An enlisted man reports, "Under stress of physical danger I would notice a distinct reaction towards prayer and a desire to believe in eternal life." A chaplain says, "My impression is that there has been a great renewing of belief in immortality."

Under the stimulus of this added interest the faith in immortality, already latent in so many men, became temporarily at least more conscious and strong. This renewed faith was not the product of reasoning, nor was it largely connected in men's minds with Christian evidence. It was an instinctive assertion of human nature in the face of war's disaster.

"Spontaneously the feeling arises as one views the broken and mangled bodies of the dead and dying and the row upon row of wooden crosses that mark the graves of the dead, 'Of course, there must be life beyond; this surely is not the end of all.' "

"Men might think that they themselves should pass into nothingness, but they do not believe it possible that such a fate has pursued those whom they have loved and lost awhile on the battlefield."

"They discovered a great natural conviction not reasoned but instinctive, the conviction of the certainty of a future life. The poor clay, about to be wrapped in its black blanket, was 'not him.' He was elsewhere but he was still alive. Thus the violent storms and tensions of war had cleared the air and revealed to men their intuitive knowledge of immortality in the form of an intense and definite personal assurance."<sup>25</sup>

The following excerpt from a letter of a young officer, of the class of 1918 of Yale, to his mother, is illustrative of the instinctive confidence in a future life held by men at the front:

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<sup>25</sup> John Kelman, "The War and Preaching."

"If I must make the supreme sacrifice . . . the life that I lay down will be my preparation for the grander, finer life that I shall take up. I shall *live*! And I shall be nearer to you than I am now or ever have been."

Some have found considerable significance in the phrases or words commonly used by soldiers in speaking of death. Thus Dr. George C. Stewart of Chicago says: "There are two expressions used by the soldiers for death, and they reflect two attitudes: one distinctly religious and the other skeptical or agnostic. I am glad to say that the religious phrase is the one most commonly used. The skeptical expression is 'napoo' (corruption of *il n'y en a plus*) and the religious expression is 'gone west.' It is doubtful whether these common expressions can be made to carry a large burden of interpretation. In part they represent that same diffidence in speaking of death that is common in civil life. Compare, 'If anything should happen to me.' 'When I am gone.' In part they express the vagueness of men's conception of immortality."

There is no evidence that the general belief in immortality encouraged by the war was connected with the traditional Christian imagery of Judgment, Heaven and Hell, at least so far as Protestants are concerned. It had little content; was not associated closely with any idea of salvation; was optimistic, without much thought of moral judgment or sharp alternatives.<sup>26</sup>

A number of chaplains have thought it necessary to combat the idea that death in battle saves. Sherwood Eddy says that the idea was "widely preached by many British chaplains." Norman MacLean reports that he found the idea occasionally amongst British soldiers. We have no evidence at hand that the belief was often

<sup>26</sup> The following is interesting as indicating one of the effects of the war on a chaplain's views. "Can we conceive the soldier hurled from the hell of battle into an endless hell? . . . It is equally inconceivable that lives so stained and marred can 'immediately pass into glory.' . . . The Church must find a third category. It must propound not only a doctrine of heaven and hell, but also a doctrine of an intermediate state." MacLean and Sclater.



preached or found in the American army. It was certainly not prevalent.

Dr. Kelman summarizes the situation as regards the belief in immortality as follows: "The belief in a future life has disclosed itself at the seat of war as a fundamental element in human nature, an instinctive conviction of the soul of man. But that is obviously not enough. When the trials which disclosed it are over, men will forget, and lose it among the absorbing interests of the world. To really grasp and hold it, so that it will master us amid the passing show of life, we must enter the larger world of the spiritual and get in among the powers of the eternal life."

#### APPRECIATION OF THE MEANING OF THE CROSS

In war men have had experiences which make certain Christian ideas more intelligible and real to them—such as Sacrifice, Sharing, Burden-bearing, Fellowship, the Cross and Atonement. On the level of human relations all of these become the personal experience of many men—in the risking of life for one another, in the close fellowship and sharing of the more intense moments, in the bearing of the burdens and disloyalties of the unfit by the fit, in the willing sacrifice of self for the furtherance of the cause. A common ground between the preacher of Christianity and many hearers has been furnished, which has been taken advantage of during the war and may be taken advantage of for some time to come.

"Men are actually finding out what it means to suffer for others or to have others suffer and die for them. It is not difficult now to make them see the significance of the Christian teaching of vicarious sacrifice and atonement."

"I do not think that the service rendered and the sacrifice made have in most cases been connected in the minds of the men with Christianity. But the two are so alike that they will easily be led from one to the other."

"We must remember that the preaching of the Cross

has suffered from lack of experience in the hearers as well as from lack of passion in those who preached. It has left them cold because they did not know by experience anything of what it meant. Now they are in a position to understand better what Christ did because of what they themselves have been doing.

"To many young men in ordinary times life is practically without sacrifice. In the absence of any clear call for it, they take the line of least resistance, and the natural love of comfort and pleasure is the predominant motive of their daily lives. With the call to arms hundreds of thousands of such young men, neither more nor less selfish than their neighbors, suddenly chose and accepted a life of supreme and daily self-sacrifice."<sup>27</sup>

"Certain facts are made plain. Chiefly that evil committed in this world must be paid for. . . . The soldiers have discovered the fact and continually with startling cheerfulness assent to it, that we are bound up in the bundle of life; that there is such a thing as the solidarity of the race; that God acts on the assumption that the human race is a family.

"In this war there is nothing plainer than that the burdens are unequally distributed and that it is in the nature of things that such inequality must continue. Some are fit to carry the burden and pay the debt and some are not."<sup>28</sup>

The obvious dangers in approaching Christianity through the experiences of the soldier are that too great emphasis be placed on the mere fact of suffering regardless of the character and spirit of the person who suffers, that the Cross of Christ be reduced to the meaning of "a man laying down his life for his friends," that religion be identified with patriotism, and loyalty to the nation with loyalty to the Kingdom of God.

#### INTEREST IN THE BIBLE

From the first day when America went to war to the last day of 1918, 4,558,871 volumes of the Holy Scriptures were supplied to soldiers and sailors by the Ameri-

<sup>27</sup> John Kelman, "The War and Preaching."

<sup>28</sup> MacLean and Sclater, "God and the Soldier."

can Bible Society and the Y. M. C. A. Even allowing for duplication and loss this represents a tremendous distribution of the Bible or portions of it among the men in service. Millions of men must have received them. We do not know how many kept and carried them, but the number was very great. A divisional chaplain writes: "During the first two weeks' fighting in the Argonne, my chaplains buried between fourteen hundred and fifteen hundred dead. The personal effects came through my hands. I did not count them. But I venture to say that in 90 per cent of the personal effects of these dead soldiers there was a Bible or a prayer book, a crucifix or a scapular, or some indication that religion was an element in that man's life."<sup>29</sup> An officer says: "I have assisted in the burial of many American dead on the battlefields of France, and almost without exception we found a pocket Testament among the effects carried on the persons of the men."

There was a very great increase in Bible carrying.

Was there the same increase in Bible reading? Certainly not to anywhere near the same extent. "Thousands carried Testaments and seldom read them." "Although hundreds of thousands of Bibles have been handed out, they have not been noticeably used except during passage through the U boat zone and on the fringes of No Man's Land." Many men figuratively transferred the Bible from the top shelf to the blouse pocket. It was comforting to have there as a symbol of religion and a suggestion of home piety. It was somehow a good thing to have along.

"I found that the carrying of Testaments brought comfort, as though there were some efficacy in merely having possession of such. To Protestant boys they

<sup>29</sup> "I had to search the dead bodies for their little possessions. The doctor and I were amazed to find that nearly every man had a Bible or cross on him. 'They do seem religious,'—he said,—'these boys; I should never have thought they would have such things.' Perhaps they carried them as a charm—a sort of magic, perhaps because they felt more than they know that 'such things' contained the secret of life and death and immortality, perhaps because they had a deep love for them. None can say." Maurice Ponsonby.

served as 'amulets.' My experience was that they were read very little except under stress of fear or excitement."

"My work has all been in the hospitals and for the most part with wounded or convalescent men. I do not recall ever seeing a boy reading his Bible or even having one. But their personal effects were of necessity reduced to the minimum."

But there is much testimony to the effect that these Bibles and Testaments were read or "read at" by many men, probably by many who had never looked into them before. Three hospital chaplains in different locations report as follows:

"You can see patients propped up in bed, reading their Testaments, wherever you go."

"Prayer books and Testaments were very popular and were read, especially the latter."

"Testament and Bible reading is common among the bed patients."

"I am surprised at the number of men whom I find in the barracks, reading their Testaments at night. Several times I have seen them reading their Testaments at the rest period in drill." (An enlisted man.)

It is very difficult to estimate the significance or results of this. Doubtless some men read with a vague notion that it was a meritorious thing to do. For some it was one of the expressions of emergency religion—one of the accepted practices of religion to which men blindly turned for inward peace or outward security. Chaplains do not seem to know what men looked for in the Bible principally or what they found there. In summary, it is safe to say that very many men have carried Bibles or Testaments who never did before. This may have increased their sentiment in regard to it and their curiosity as to its contents. It is probable that many men, on occasions at least, read the Scriptures for the first time in many years. With what results we do not know.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The following judgment by a divisional chaplain is of interest: "Only in exceptional cases and under the guidance of strong personalities have Bible classes and discussion groups proved popular and enduring."

## THE DEMAND FOR REALITY

One of the things which chaplains speak of very commonly is an increased demand for reality which they believe to be characteristic of many men who have been to war. They say that "the soldier has seen the real values of life," that "when men faced death cant and hypocrisy of every sort were sloughed off," that "Christian teachers will be put on their mettle in days to come by men who will want plain English on fundamental matters." Certainly war carried men out into the borders of life where they met the "harder" facts of pain and death and the physical impact of man with man—the things we ordinarily avoid or cover or delegate to police and hangmen. They were threatened with the loss of all they had and may well have decided which was more worth trying to save—skin and pleasure, or soul. Some of the most elementary and deepgoing of human emotions were stirred. Perhaps the finest quality that some men won through to was something called "reality"—an absence of pretense, a steadiness, and readiness to meet eye to eye anything life may bring. It is such a quality which some have read in the faces of returning men. It is said that they will demand it with new emphasis of the preachers and representatives of religion. "If war itself has not supplied him (the soldier) with revelation in large measure, it may yet have endowed him with a great hunger and a direct undeceivable eye for judging the world of ideas to which he returns. Already one is aware of a keen wind astir seeming to bring with it a demand for substance in place of husks, for contemporaneous insight instead of mere inheritance, which may well warn all doctors of religion that a time of reckoning is at hand."<sup>81</sup>

As to what "the real values of life" or "the fundamental matters" are, men are bound to differ. And "reality" is not one of the easiest words to define. But

<sup>81</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," *Atlantic Monthly*.

when men seek to interpret it in connection with the new demand made upon the presentation of religion they usually speak of such things as applicability, contemporaneity, literalness, concreteness, intelligibility.

The following are typical expressions of this demand as expressed or interpreted by chaplains and others.

"The war's principal effect upon religion has been the demand for applicability. This has brought about a revelation of the chasm now existing between the average man and the institutions and doctrines of Christianity. They are to him unreal."

"In my judgment the soldier will return with a demand both for a deeper interpretation of spiritual things and a more simple application in practical life of the truths of the faith."<sup>32</sup>

"They live in the present world. No argument based on the customs of the earliest century will reach them. Which church is doing the work today?"

"They do not care much whether God created the world in six days or 16,000 years, or whether the church came into existence on Whitsunday."

"The revision now needed is in the interest of making as much as possible as intelligible as possible."<sup>33</sup>

"The secret of reality in preaching is intelligibility, and the secret of intelligibility is interest. 'Interest,' 'interesting' are to be understood in their etymological sense—interest—that which is common to speaker and hearer, that which they have between them."<sup>34</sup>

"All that consists in empty formulas, beautiful as they may be, powerfully as they may have contributed to nourish souls; all the formulas which are today empty because our philosophic or religious thought, our experiences or our conception of life have outgrown them or caused them to burst their frames—all such formulas must disappear."<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Edgar DeWitt Jones, in *The Christian Century*.

<sup>33</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," *Atlantic Monthly*.

<sup>34</sup> John Kelman, "The War and Preaching."

<sup>35</sup> Alfred Eugene Casalis, "For France and the Faith."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE EFFECT ON THE CHURCHES AND CHURCHMANSHIP

In Part I of this volume we have discussed the attitude of the men in the army toward the Churches and have considered certain criticisms of the Churches frequently expressed. In the present chapter we shall consider how these attitudes which the men brought into the army have been modified by their military experience.

#### CHURCH UNITY AND COOPERATION

The most distinct and important of the immediate effects of army life and war on the Churches and churchmanship were in the line of church cooperation or unity. We have already spoken in Part I of the very considerable indifference to denominational lines shown by men in the army. Unquestionably the situation encouraged and developed this indifference. Only three simple religious divisions were officially recognized—Catholic, Protestant, Jewish. Welfare agencies in the main representative of these three divisions were recognized. And some effort was made to assign chaplains in accordance with the predominance or proportion of these elements in a given unit. But the divisions of Protestantism were given no recognition or encouragement beyond that received in the proportional appointment of chaplains and the admission of denominational "camp pastors" to the home camps. Under these conditions it was natural that men already disposed to make little of religious differences should make even less of them in the army.

"Denominational lines, so far as their lives in the army go, have practically disappeared."

"There was no room for sectarianism in the army."

"We have all but forgotten our denominational affiliations over here, and the more we have forgotten them the better it has been."

"No one here thinks of asking for a Presbyterian or a Methodist or a Baptist chaplain. If he comes in the spirit of Christ it is enough."

It is one thing to say that army life developed and encouraged a prevailing indifference to denominationalism. It is another to say that it gave any large number of men an experience of church unity. Men of many denominations of course met together at religious meetings, even at the sacrament.

"With reference to church unity, the men in the army *united*. Catholics and Baptists and Presbyterians and Southern Methodists, Jews, and even the one Mormon and the two Mohammedans in our regiment came to hear me preach. The question of denomination was never raised."

"In our regiment at —— were Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians, agnostics, Universalists, and others. We all worked, played, and worshipped together with never a word against any religious belief."

Was this church unity? We question whether it was. The "binder" in this union was principally comradeship in arms, not fellowship in a common faith. We are inclined to believe that such a sense of fellowship, of organic life in the Church, what has been referred to as the "all-one-body" feeling, is relatively scarce in Protestantism. The comradeship of the army entered in as a substitute for this and united men of many affiliations and many faiths in a half religious, half military fellowship.

This does not mean that this experience has no significance for the cause of church unity. It is a short step from one to the other. And men, having tasted one, may well have more understanding and desire for the other.

More important than the mingling of men from various church bodies and from none was the development of



cooperation and fellowship among the chaplains in the army. This too was, of course, greatly influenced by the practical necessities of the situation as well as by the spirit of "the service," but it resulted in a real religious unity and cooperation. Chaplain Brent says: "The most striking thing in connection with our chaplains' organization has been the loyalty of the chaplains to one another and to our office. At the beginning of our organization it was agreed as a principle of the office that there were to be no official secrets, but that every problem or letter concerning our chaplains which came to the office should be the property and the responsibility of all. We were to respect the convictions of others as our own, and to minister to the needs of others irrespective of their religious affiliations as though they were our own men. Not only have these principles been carried out in the G. H. Q. Chaplains' Office, so that there have never been any serious shadows or difficulty among ourselves, but it has also been the motive power always of the chaplains' organization throughout the army. The brotherhood which has sprung up is a living force."<sup>36</sup>

Bishop Perry, who, as chief of the Chaplains' Bureau of the American Red Cross was at the head of a force of seventy-six Red Cross chaplains, representing sixteen different denominations, has written of them: "A singular fellowship unites them, prophetic of a unity that must survive the war if the capacity for real religion has been accurately gauged. Without surrendering their own convictions or descending to the common ground of compromise, these representatives of every church, Roman, Anglican, and Protestant, have learned to work side by side, understanding and respecting one another's positions."<sup>37</sup>

This cooperation took the form of conference and common preparation at the chaplains' schools, the sharing

<sup>36</sup> Report to the Adjutant General.

<sup>37</sup> Article in *The Living Church*.

of information and plans, the securing of religious ministrations for men of other faiths than their own, and administrative unity in the A. E. F. and its divisional organizations.

It went beyond this in the form of direct ministrations to the members of various religious bodies. Within Protestantism there has been very considerable cooperation and interchange in the matter of baptism and initiation into membership.

"Men of all denominations have freely welcomed soldiers into the church of their choice and transferred their membership to the home church. Baptists are baptized by sprinkling when it is impossible to immerse them, and the Baptist minister participates in these sacramental services. Ministers of other denominations have not hesitated to immerse Baptists when there has been time and opportunity to do so."

"One man was baptized by a Methodist minister using the Lutheran form of baptism with two Baptists as witnesses, and the service was performed in a Presbyterian elder's room. . . . Not one of the participants doubted the efficacy of the rite."<sup>38</sup>

"I have baptized eight and received men into churches as follows: Methodist Episcopal, South, 6; Methodist Episcopal, 8; Presbyterian, 3; Congregationalist, 1."

"I have received into the Methodist Church three members. I have had a special service for them here in my room, and received them for their own pastors. I have received into the Presbyterian Church one member, two into the Christian Church, one into the Baptist Church, and one into the Lutheran Church." (An Episcopalian.)

This type of mutual ministration did not, of course, often take place between Protestants and Catholics, but one Protestant reports: "I have brought to their priests for baptism six and gathered together a class of twenty-five to whom the Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago came out and administered confirmation. I have brought twenty-seven others who had not been to their

<sup>38</sup> Edwin A. McAlpin, Jr., in *The Continent*.

confession nor made their communion for a long time back to these duties."

In the religious ministry to the sick, the cooperation extended beyond the limits of Protestantism to Roman Catholics and Jews.

"I was the only chaplain there at Orleans and ministered to everybody independently of church affiliation. I used to hear confession of Roman Catholic soldiers and give them the sacrament. I was accustomed to pray by their bedsides as well as at the bedside of every sort of Protestant and Jew."

"I remember one man especially, a Jew, who was dying. When I asked him if I might not pray with him he replied at once that he was of Jewish faith. 'That makes no difference,' I replied, 'we have the same God, our Heavenly Father, and my Saviour was a Jew.' And then I prayed as we both could, commending his spirit to God's care."

The following are typical of other cases of generous cooperation between Roman Catholics and Protestants:

"Only the other day the Roman Catholic chaplain here offered me the church of ——— for a Protestant burial. He told me recently that he would be perfectly willing to have me officiate at the burial of his people."

"We had a burial of a boy and the Roman Catholic chaplain had a boy to bury at the same time. When we were ready for the burial I thought of course that he would want to go through his service separately and asked him how we should arrange it. He answered that it would be all right for me to read the service and he stood beside me while I read the service for the boys of both faiths."

"In my last letter I told you of the old French priest. . . . Well, he asked me to come back today—Sunday—to the high mass at eight o'clock. I rose long before daybreak, had breakfast with company and then slipped into the old church. I sat halfway up, but when the old priest saw me he left the altar and came down to where I sat and asked me to come forward. I declined but he insisted and he escorted me up inside the altar rail and set me in the Bishop's chair. . . . After the mass the

priest let me have the church for my own service, . . . the whole company was there, . . . and the curé gave each boy a little Catholic medal." (A Baptist chaplain overseas.)

Another chaplain tells of conducting a funeral in a Roman Catholic Church, with the priest and choir assisting.

A further development in the direction of unity which took place in the army was the increased openness of the Communion<sup>39</sup> and the increased interchange in its administration. Within Protestantism the Communion was generally open to Christians of every name, with the exception, in some cases, of the Southern Baptist and Lutheran communions. Occasionally Roman priests administered the Communion to Protestants. Roman Catholics have not infrequently received the Communion at the hands of Protestant ministers.

"I invited all baptized Christians to come to their Lord's Table and Baptists and all came."<sup>40</sup>

"I gave the Communion to Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and Lutherans."

"All baptized men were invited to the Communion and a good many men of other communions came regularly to the services."

"In the field, and indeed at Camp Upton, I have more than once had Catholics take Communion at my hands."

"Men of all communions were at these services. I forbade none who came seeking. I invited all in the terms of the invitation itself, leaving it to the men to decide whether they could accept the terms."

"On Sundays I take the Communion service. I invite all Christians to come. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and occasionally Roman Catholics are glad to come."

"Many Protestants received the Blessed Sacrament at my hands and I have on occasions heard the confessions

<sup>39</sup> "We can never be one—we can never in any deep sense know the blessedness of Christian charity—until we can truly meet together to do what the Lord Himself bade us do in remembrance of Him." MacLean and Slater, "God and the Soldier."

<sup>40</sup> The following quotations on this topic are principally from Episcopalians, since the Episcopal War Commission had made inquiries on the subject among a number of their chaplains, and the replies were kindly made accessible to this Committee.

of Roman Catholics and given them the Blessed Sacrament."

"Chaplain ——— and I have services together, . . . with a celebration of the Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month, at which I officiate, a Congregational clergyman assisting."

It is impossible to say with much confidence what the results of these developments and experiences are or will be. Probably they have increased the demand for church cooperation or unity among those who have served as chaplains. A large proportion of the chaplains with whom we have corresponded speak of this as one of the things they desire most for the Church, and many put it in the forefront.

"We must prepare ourselves for church cooperation. No longer will the name of a church, a particular church, have any challenge in it."

"The fundamental trouble when you face the three great phases of church activity, Religious Education, Social Service, and Missions, is lack of unity. We can do nothing on a saving scale till we have unity."

"It is time that the Church put a stop to its competition and strife among denominations and applied itself definitely and unreservedly to ministering to the deep social and religious needs of mankind."

"The actual experience in cooperative activity in behalf of the great army task has created a very strong sentiment for cooperation."

"There is no need so great as Christian unity."

To what extent there has been developed an increased interest in unity on the part of laymen in the army is more difficult to say. A conference of some sixty-five men held in a "hut" in France expressed a unanimous desire to unite the denominations. An officer writes: "The common life of so many different men in barracks, on the march, in the hospital, eating, sleeping, living, fighting, suffering together, has made them ask, 'Why can't we worship together? Why do we have all the different denominations?' They felt this confusion before they

entered the army and the common life of close fellowship they have shared for these months has increased their feeling." On the other hand men say they "have met no criticism relative to impatience with sects or denominational differences or lines." Certainly it is not one of the main interests of the returned soldier. As we have already said the majority of returned soldiers are not greatly interested in the Church, whether united or divided.

The question is as to the effect on the men within the Churches. This at least can be said. They have experienced a cooperative, non-competitive ministry. They have worshipped in intense moments with men of many affiliations. They have seen a tacit recognition of the validity of "orders" and "sacraments" other than those of their own church body. It would be very strange if these experiences had left no mark.

#### INTERRUPTION OF RELIGIOUS HABITS

There was a general interruption of habits of public and private worship in army life. This was the case in home training camps and to an even greater extent in the combat areas. The necessary rigidity of army routine made attendance at regular services impossible for many men. The conditions of war often made it impracticable to have services. The lack of privacy militated against private devotions, especially any outward expressions such as kneeling or Bible reading.

"The routine of camp life breaks up most old habits good and bad. Church attendance is small. Bible classes are very small, sometimes to the vanishing point."

"At the front in my experience religious work was almost out of the question. Large groups of men were always risky. You never could tell when a shell might come along. Altogether it was a very difficult matter to hold services."

"Men who had gone to church regularly before have gotten out of the habit in the army."

"Religious habits have decreased if one considers the old habits of going to church or religious services, the saying of stated prayers, and other outward expressions."

It is doubtful whether this interruption was sufficiently extended or complete to affect permanently men with a living church connection. At most it probably has shaken loose some who were bound to the Church by the last slender bond of a formal or conventional relationship.

Though probably fewer men maintained regular religious observance in the army than in civil life, it is quite possible that a much larger proportion of men occasionally attended Church, said prayers, or read the Bible than when at home. Religion received a certain amount of public recognition and support in the form of regimental services, special occasions, etc. The alternatives were frequently very few, and men sometimes felt like the Scotchman who explained to a chaplain in the well-filled hut, "Och! We'd gang ony where on a nicht like this."

The same causes which interrupted religious habits resulted in a very general disregard of Sunday. Routine was maintained with little change in training camps. Any observance of the day was frequently impossible overseas. Recreation and entertainment in the form of games, theaters, etc., were not only permitted but frequently encouraged. Many chaplains report, "There is likely to be an increased neglect of Sunday."

#### PUBLIC WORSHIP

Circumstances in the army led to a great informality in religious services. The surroundings were informal. The men were of many traditions, not accustomed to any one form. The hours were irregular. This tendency was furthered by the belief on the part of many religious workers that such services were most effective. In one direction this represents a gain. Traditional usages have

been interrupted and we may expect to see a much greater measure of experimentation in services on the part of ministers who have served in the army. Many of the services had a simplicity and directness and intensity which will make those who participated restless with much of our common worship. The judgment of the Anglican Committee on Worship applies to American conditions: "We think it is true to say that nearly all men have found it a comfort to have services at the front which obviously aim at being simple, real and short. And we believe it is fair to argue that a great number of men at the front will vote that by contrast, services at home, if conducted in pre-war fashion, are deficient in these qualities."<sup>41</sup>

A more dubious result has been the development of the "bright and snappy" service and the overstrained effort to express religion in the vernacular. Still worse has been the combination of vaudeville and preaching, and the confusion of entertainment with worship.

"In many cases the men objected to such informality as combining vaudeville singing and jazz band music with religious services. Some welfare secretaries seemed to think the men wouldn't take religion straight. A mistaken notion."

"So many men have said to me that they go to church because it is 'quiet and restful'—and these men of small training—that I feel there is danger in 'bright and snappy' services. They do want clear-cut, definite preaching and up-to-date methods, but with this they want dignity and fine standards."

"There was a place for informal services. There was also a place for services of dignity and beauty. I found it helpful to have a printed service on little leaflets which I distributed when we gathered for worship. Often I would begin with a talk, and get the men's minds and hearts in the right mood and attitude, and then have them read the service with me. It worked. I don't think we should too easily dismiss the worth of formal worship."

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<sup>41</sup> The Report of the Archbishops' Second Committee of Inquiry.



"I should query whether the apparent demand for 'bright and snappy' services is not rather a demand for plainness and hard-hitting, the Billy Sunday or John Bunyan virtues, of which the 'bright and snappy' ideal is but a tinsel misinterpretation."

In certain localities and among certain chaplains there was a great increase in the use of the Communion service. At Camp Devens, for example, there was an early Communion in each of the Y. M. C. A. buildings every Sunday morning, conducted by ministers of many Protestant denominations not accustomed to the frequent use of the service. Especially in the case of Episcopal chaplains this service was very largely and effectively used both in this country and in France. Many believe that their experience indicates a widespread responsiveness to the sacramental emphasis and calls for a greatly increased use of it within Protestantism.<sup>42</sup>

"I have found many men who were not Episcopalians eager for the Holy Communion."

"I have usually had the Communion service with my men twice a month and have found them very appreciative of it."

"The value of the Holy Communion as the service which appeals to men is something which I did not believe until I had proved it for myself."

"I share the common experience of the chaplains that the objective in religion has ministered very appealingly."<sup>42a</sup>

"I am convinced that the sacraments and their teachings are to have a newer meaning and a wider emphasis."

"As a general rule, I found the response to frequent Communion services very genuine. It was a revelation to me of the value of the Communion as a *vehicle of worship* to see how men would come regularly to a *weekly* Communion. At the front it was my custom to administer Communion after almost any Sunday service, and

<sup>42</sup> "Every one must have noticed the popularity of ritual, and especially of sacraments, among men who had not previously felt any particular need or inclination for these ways of worship. No one who has attended Holy Communion at the front, where little companies gathered to receive the bread and wine, will ever forget how singularly appropriate and natural it seemed." John Kelman, "The War and Preaching."

<sup>42a</sup> Published interview with Senior Chaplain Brent.

there was a very real response. But the response was just as real in the training camp in France before we went to the front, and in our last billets before we sailed for home."

"Attendance on weekly Communion services in my experience was not at all limited to Lutherans and Episcopalians. Men from all churches seemed to find something in the sacrament which filled a need no preaching service could reach. I believe we shall all come to a more frequent use of it." (A Presbyterian.)

The actual extent of the increase is impossible to gauge. Some of it was deceptive, inasmuch as it took place where there were great numbers of men, often constantly shifting. In such circumstances the increased frequency or prominence of the service would not represent a similar increase in its use. It may also be true that under the circumstances of war the sacrament with its definiteness and objectivity made an appeal which it would not have with the same men in normal life.

### SPECIAL MINISTRIES

In the army certain elements in the ministry were especially called for and widely extended—especially the ministry of personal service, the ministry to the sick, and the care of the dead.

Through the ministry of personal service many representatives of the Church have come in touch with great numbers of men whom they would otherwise have seldom reached. Though the number of chaplains provided by the army was entirely inadequate, the chaplaincy gave to those ministers who enlisted in it a very unusual opportunity to serve in tangible and useful ways the men with whom they were associated. And in the Y. M. C. A., Red Cross, etc., many more clergymen and laymen found a like opportunity. What the results have been in modifying men's views of the professional ministry we do not know. But many ministers have

returned with a renewed conviction that in disinterested and practical service to the concrete and felt needs of men lies the most direct way to their confidence and loyalty.

The ministry to the sick, wounded and dying was one of the largest and most important elements in the work of the chaplains. "The service of the clergy for the sick and wounded is the vivid impression that the war has left with a hundred thousand of our soldiers. For thousands more it was their last experience in life. While at the time of the great offensive, the mobile and evacuation hospitals were receiving and discharging patients by the hundred, the chaplain was among them, ministering to the wounded, receiving last messages, and administering last rites by the side of the dying, identifying and burying the dead. In the great base hospitals farther from the lines there was the opportunity for continuous intercourse and growing friendship with the same men day after day as they were nursed back to health, often to their places in the line."<sup>43</sup>

In the course of their hospital experience several Protestant chaplains have felt the need of something similar to the last rites of the Roman Church.<sup>44</sup>

"I think that the war will teach Protestantism the value of symbolism. I have been particularly impressed with this in my hospital work when I have had to deal with men whose apprehension had been dulled by disease or

<sup>43</sup> Chaplain James DeW. Perry, Jr.

<sup>44</sup> "Ritual is a compressed and rapid language, able to express much in a simple gesture. One need be no believer in magic to profit from the dedication implied in making the sign of the Cross, or in having it made over him. A nurse in a base hospital, who has had occasion to witness many deaths, contrasts the simplicity of the Catholic rites and their evident value for the men with the semi-embarrassment of the Protestant minister, who must, as person to person, find 'something to say.' The rite ought to bring to the dying man an authoritative gesture of the spiritual life of the race, declaring to him that in the solitude of passing he is accompanied by a divine solicitude.

"Such an affirmation cannot be rightly made, it is true, except by a thinker; here Protestantism is right as against any quasi mechanical administration of sacraments. But neither can such an affirmation be competently made by any individual on his own authority; here the organization which to any man best represents our spiritual heritage is alone competent, for the reason that it alone can convey to him the meaning." W. E. Hocking, in *Atlantic Monthly*.

injury. There have been times when it has been practically impossible to give them ideas through the spoken word, but when, if for instance they had been taught the symbolism of the Cross, an idea could have been given them through the sense of sight, which would have been a great help."

"I used to think the R. C.'s had an advantage in their confessional and ritual for the dying. It was something they were accustomed to from childhood and was natural and comforting, but I did not see how without that childhood training we Protestants could improvise an equivalent ritual or ceremony."

It has been pointed out, on the other hand, that men trained to dependence on the Church for their assurance of God's care and forgiveness suffered additional distress when under the circumstances of battle they had to die without its ministrations.

The experience in the army has demonstrated what was apparent in civil life, how religion and the Church retain their hold on death long after they have lost their hold on life. No function of the chaplain was more universally demanded and respected than the care of the dead. "Never will the salute of the men be more reverent, their greeting more affectionate, their wistful gratitude more apparent than when the chaplain returns to his outfit, footsore and weary of heart, after a day spent in the burial of those who have been called upon to make the supreme sacrifice." Under the conditions of war "intimate and loving family care is impossible, and the sense of gratitude to the one who will assume that labor is unbounded and inexpressible."<sup>45</sup>

Men were ready to take part in burial services even at considerable personal risk. "I remember one occasion in particular where I called for volunteers as the plot was under fire, and the whole battery volunteered. It was quite trying for me to stand there by the grave in the dripping rain, exposed to shell-fire, but the men in the

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<sup>45</sup> Chaplain Brent's Report to the Adjutant General.

party were quiet and respectful, while the chaplain said prayers and there was not the slightest indication that they were not glad to expose themselves in order that the forms of the Church might be observed."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EFFECT ON MORAL LIFE AND STANDARDS

The same differences of opinion as to the total effect of war and military training appear in the case of moral life and standards as were reported in the case of personal religion. There are observers who find no marked change. There are those who feel certain of improvement or retrogression. The question of permanence is always present. It is impossible to strike a satisfactory balance between local losses and local gains, improvement in certain directions and demoralization in others.

"The constantly recurring question, Does war improve men or deteriorate them? is a question which has no answer. For war itself does neither one thing nor another. Certainly neither war nor any other drastic experience leaves men where it found them. But any exposure of large bodies of men to extraordinary conditions will segregate them into two groups, those who are strengthened by the ordeal and those weakened by it."<sup>46</sup>

#### THE EFFECTS OF ARMY DISCIPLINE

There is a great difference of opinion as to the permanent, or even the immediate, effects of army discipline. On the one hand, men speak of the added virility and breadth, of the subordination of self-interest, the learning of obedience and the meaning of authority; on the other hand, of the lowering of individual initiative and responsibility, and of an outward and legalistic view of obedience developed by army life.

Unquestionably, thousands of men have gained mentally and physically from the comradeship and

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<sup>46</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Morale and Its Enemies."

discipline of the army. Frail men have found health, "soft" men have gained in healthy physical and spiritual readiness to "endure hardness," timid men have learned to mingle naturally with their fellows, indolent and self-indulgent men have lived in the service temperate and vigorous lives. All this is gain even though temporary.

The evils of military discipline lie chiefly in the loss of personal initiative and the outward and legalistic view of obedience that it may foster.

"The army has the machinery by which it can force me to obey; anything that I can do to evade that machinery is perfectly legitimate. It is the army's concern to make a soldier of me; it is my concern to endure the process with as little discomfort to myself as I can."<sup>47</sup>

"The soldier's life is so arranged that the only thing to do is to be irresponsible. His food, shelter, and clothing are to be provided for him. . . . He can do nothing of his own volition. . . . The shape of his shoes, the color of his hat, and the size of his necktie, and the place of his bed are regulated and determined for him. He lives a life where the will has no meaning, and where thought and initiative are not only not demanded but suppressed."<sup>48</sup>

"Another year of this and I won't be worth while living to do anything more than wrap up packages and run errands. It may be that the deadening effect of it will wear off in a few weeks. I hope so." (An enlisted man.)

"In my observation, there was no lowering of individual initiative among the men. Perhaps the artillery, where I served, is better in this regard than some other branches. Great individual initiative and responsibility are necessary to success when an artillery regiment is in action, or moving about at the front. Take a driver of a four-line mule team, hauling supplies. He will be routed out at midnight and told to hitch up and take a load out through the night to some place at the front he has never visited. He must go over strange roads, often through shell fire, find the place, deliver his load, and get his mules

<sup>47</sup> T. W. Pym, "Papers from Picardy."

<sup>48</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, "The Moral Devastation of War," *The Dial*, April, 1919.

back to camp. That's pretty different from driving horses on a farm or pushing a pen in some office. Take the non-commissioned officers—every corporal is absolutely responsible for the men under him, their appearance, safety, discipline, efficiency. Take the mechanics, who must know the guns better than the officers, and be responsible that they are always in shape for instant use. Take the mess sergeants and stable sergeants, the horse-shoers—each has a job whose responsibility is really tremendous.”

The resultant of these influences, good and bad, it is impossible to prophesy. At best we can only suggest the possibilities.

“The soldier's life is unsettled; will that produce in him a habit of restlessness and roving? He is accustomed to destroy, not construct; will that make him a waster, and put him out of patience with the slow building of production? He is used to sensational and sudden effectiveness; will this impose on him a dramatic or melodramatic mind, making all ‘piping times of peace’ dull to him, and unnerve him for all quiet labor? He is habituated to consuming, living by requisition on goods supplied lavishly (sometimes) by others; will this create in him the temper of dependency?

“Above all, the soldier has borne the brunt, and he knows it. What will be the effect of that? What argument is it building up in him today? ‘Now, civilians, our share is done; we rest on our laurels; give us our ease and our rewards’? Or is it this: ‘We have learned to choose the harder part, and to do more than our share; give us our heaviest burdens and we will show you how men can carry them’?

“There is no prophet who ought to venture an answer to these questions, unless he can see with what hidden approvals, rebellions, provisos the alleged ‘habits’ are being accepted.”<sup>49</sup>

It is this last consideration which needs especially to be kept in mind in discussing the effect of military experience on men's mental or moral life. To “submit” to discipline for a time as being something essential to the

<sup>49</sup> W. E. Hocking, “Morale and Its Enemies.”



performance of an unpleasant and distasteful duty, all the while loving independence, is altogether different from "succumbing" to discipline from mental laziness and lack of initiative, however much they may look alike outwardly.

This factor of motive has been much overlooked in the discussion as to whether the war has "brutalized" men. It is not uncommonly said that men "have been hardened and to some extent brutalized." It is a result which "the pacifist" in many of us almost wants to see. It would be additional evidence of how cruel and brutal a thing war is. But we do not believe that any such result can be largely seen in the men returning from active service.

Dr. Kelman has the following to say on this topic as a result of his observation of British troops:

"It has often been lamented that the dreadful deeds which have to be performed in such actions as a bayonet charge or a bombing raid upon enemy trenches must permanently brutalize those who have to do them. This however is not the report of those who know the men. . . . It seems to be the motive and not the deed that counts in permanent moral consequence."<sup>50</sup>

#### THE EFFECT OF THE GROUP EMPHASIS

Perhaps the greatest single factor in the army as it affected moral standards and moral life was its group character. Circumstances and training developed a tremendous "community" of interests. Not only were men dressed alike. They were drilled as a "body." They were dealt with as a "body." They were all in essentially the same "fix." They were separated from the special interests and groupings which normally influenced them. The whole life was corporate. Men tended to an extraordinary degree to feel alike and think alike. Ideas, rumors, suspicions, criticism, sentiments, were as epidemic as the highly communicable diseases like

<sup>50</sup> John Kelman, "The War and Preaching."

measles and influenza. The result was not only an ideal, if very partial, democracy, but a heightening of group morality. The virtues sustained by the groups, the virtues with a strong element of sociability in them, the virtues especially demanded between man and man in close contact, were at a premium—unselfishness, generosity, humility, loyalty to the unit.

At the same time many influences served to weaken the morality of self-control—the loss of personal responsibility, the greatly heightened physical stimulus or excitement, the separation from the home interests calling for sexual restraint, the upsetting of the normal economic life calling for economic prudence, and the lack of the refinements of life demanding some niceness in language.

According to at least one prominent observer the result was something of a conflict between the ethic of the soldiers and the ethic of the preachers of Christianity. "The preachers were denouncing drinking, gambling, and immorality. The people were denouncing cowardice, selfishness, and egotism."<sup>51</sup> To what extent this conflict of emphasis became articulate among the men except through Judge Lindsey we do not know. But we believe it helps to explain the considerable criticism of the "negative ethics" of the Church that has come out of the army. The Church has frequently appeared to put first emphasis on the morality of self-control, on the virtues which make a man "above reproach."<sup>52</sup> Army life called especially for the virtues which make an easy companion and desirable neighbor.

"A great spirit of brotherhood has developed in the army."

"As a result of the military life men . . . learned to play the game with others."

<sup>51</sup> Ben Lindsey, "The Doughboy's Religion," *Cosmopolitan*.

<sup>52</sup> "I was in an officers' mess some time ago, and they were discussing a new arrival. One of them said: 'He is quiet, he doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, doesn't play bridge, and doesn't swear.' 'He must be religious,' concluded another. If the new officer had been described as cheerful, generous, hospitable, and brave, they would not have concluded that he must be religious. Yet which description is the most like Christ?" Thomas Tiplady.

## GAMBLING

As already indicated in Part I, the vices obvious in the army were gambling, profanity and sexual immorality. It is generally agreed that the first two showed a decided increase over civil life. The third presents a more complex problem.

"It is no exaggeration to say that practically every soldier gambles."<sup>53</sup>

"Men gamble who do not in civil life."

"Young men who never gambled before are now gambling."<sup>54</sup>

Various influences combined to bring this about. "No longer master of tomorrow, the spirit of chance and adventure enter as foresight disappears."<sup>55</sup> Money was of little value. Its loss left a man still provided with the necessities of life. The whole atmosphere of economic prudence was far away. Entertainment was rare and essential. The games of chance, whether crap or cards, required little paraphernalia and could be played under all circumstances. Though the army took an official position against gambling, it was often not enforced and often not enforceable without continuous 'spying.'

It is impossible to say how largely this increase will be carried over into civil life, where the conditions are so different. Gambling is certainly not very seriously disapproved of by the majority of young men. Probably many have gambled more or less habitually in the army who did so rarely or not at all before. Probably many have less conviction against something that was so generally accepted in military life.

## PROFANITY

"Swearing undoubtedly increased." "The men were under a severe strain which manifested itself in a great

<sup>53</sup> Frank Tannenbaum, "The Moral Devastation of War," *The Dial*, April, 1919.

<sup>54</sup> "The testimony of religious workers is not wholly dependable, since many ministers in civil life are dealing only with a selected class and not as in the army with men drawn from all ranks of society."

<sup>55</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Morale and Its Enemies."

increase in profanity." The main influences in bringing about this increase were the general crudeness of the surroundings, and the roughness of the life, the absence of woman, and the tension and strain of war.

Most chaplains tend to minimize its religious or moral significance and think of it as mainly due to the abnormal conditions of military life.

"Men in the army use a flow of language that would sicken, not meaning very much by it."

"Most army profanity was a juvenile habit, meaning less than it sounded."

"They are as profane as any men I have ever heard. In the mass the boys do not mean to be profane. This blasphemy is not the output of irreverence, their foul words are not the evidence of inner foulness. Much of it is no more than the hysteria of a terrible experience, the falsetto of overwrought nerves, the effort to express the inexpressible; much of it is a habit acquired uncommonly which they will shake off as they shake off the mud of the trenches."

### SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Two groups of influences were brought to bear on sexual morality by the war—conditions induced by war itself and the policy of the government and allied agencies.

The circumstances of war were mainly demoralizing as regards sex life. The separation of men from home and the normal associations with women not only took away accustomed supports but heightened men's interest in the other sex. "In the daily routine of peace, men and women acquire the habit of forgetting that they are men and women. They are able to deal with each other, not quite impersonally, but unsexually, as buyers and sellers, as employers and employed, etc. This equilibrium war everywhere destroys."<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, the boredom, monotony, and restraint of military life called for excitement and easily turned "leave" into a "moral holiday."

<sup>56</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Morale and Its Enemies."

Overseas there were added to these influences the intense stimulus of warfare combined with the extreme relaxation of the rest periods, and in some sections an astonishing amount of professional and amateur "solicitation."

Combating these influences was the policy of the government, military authorities, and allied agencies. It is fair to say that the central objective in this policy, though not of course the only one, was the elimination of venereal disease.

As summarized by the Surgeon General, "The American attack on venereal diseases has been upon the following lines:

1. The education of soldiers and civilians as to the physical dangers of venereal disease.

2. Discouragement tending to prohibition of the use of all forms of intoxicants, the idea being that the sexual impulses are always excited by such stimulation and self-control diminished.

3. Repression of all forms of illicit sexual intercourse, both clandestine and public, under the theory first advanced by American medical men, that the exercise of the sexual functions is not essential to health and manly vigor.

4. Thoroughgoing provision for, and use of, the prophylactic treatment.

5. The employment of stern measures and adequate punishment for those contracting venereal disease.

6. The calling into play of physical, social, moral and even religious factors, that might aid in keeping men free from illicit sexual intercourse, and thus free from disabling venereal disease."<sup>57</sup>

In the camps in this country this program in all its elements was carried out with remarkable effectiveness. Overseas the same thoroughness was not possible. "The foreign governments with which it was necessary to deal

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<sup>57</sup> Surgeon General's Report, June 30, 1918.

held views about prostitution very different from ours. The French believed in 'toleration' and 'regulation.' For generations they had been used to licensed brothels and registered prostitutes, inspected with greater or less care by medical officers. They felt that an army could not get along without sexual indulgence, and that an attempt to carry out such a policy was to court discontent, a lowering of morale and health standards, and perhaps even mutiny. So sincerely did they believe this that prostitution facilities for our soldiers were officially offered to the American High Command."<sup>58</sup>

As a result of the educational, recreational and repressive measures, the situation was unquestionably better in many of the large training camps than it is in many civilian communities. Men had a more intelligent knowledge of the risks. Alternative entertainment was at hand. Solicitation and sex appeal in the immediate neighborhood were practically eliminated. A man had to look for trouble and look hard. It is from these home camps that one receives the more optimistic reports.

"As to moral life it was somewhat better in the army than out of it."

"The men have been living far cleaner and more temperate lives than in civil life."

On the other hand, in certain areas in France there was a serious loss. Of such conditions the base port already mentioned is an example. Men were free, without the restraint of home opinion, and temptation was constant and fearfully insistent. The results among both officers and men were very bad. It is these areas that account for the especially pessimistic reports.

"The leave periods are times of temptation that are making a sad record."

"There's a saying here that after six months in the service if a man hasn't had a sexual experience he is either a liar or a coward."

<sup>58</sup> Raymond Fosdick, in *The New Republic*.

There is no doubt as to the remarkable effectiveness of the army policy in reducing illicit sexual intercourse, where jurisdiction over the neighborhood was permitted.

"The army statistics indicate that the rate of venereal infection contracted after admission to the army for the first year of the war will be approximately 20 per 1,000 men in the United States and 47 per 1,000 men in the expeditionary forces. The lowest rate attained prior to the present war was 91.23."<sup>59</sup> As compared with the rate during periods when men were being inducted into the service and including the cases brought in, reaching 162.4 per 1,000 in the National Army, the improvement is marked.

If these results were always attained at the expense of an increasing prophylaxis rate there would be small comfort in them for the moralist. But such was not the case. For example, in the case of the base port cited by Mr. Fosdick and already referred to, the houses of prostitution were eventually placed out of bounds. "The figures show what happened."<sup>60</sup>

	Month	Troops	Prophylaxis	Disease Cases
Houses open	August	4,571	1,669	72
	September	9,471	3,392	124
	October	3,966	2,074	67
Houses out of bounds	November	7,017	885	81
	December	4,281	539	44
	January	3,777	523	8

Colonel Snow has published a chart showing the effect of public health measures and law enforcement in lowering the venereal and prophylactic rates among troops stationed in and around San Francisco. In the four months' period illustrated not only did the venereal rate go down, but the prophylactic rate was reduced from 800 to 300.

<sup>59</sup> Rt. Rev. Wm. Lawrence, "Venereal Disease in the Army, Navy, and Community."

<sup>60</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "The Fight Against Venereal Disease," *The New Republic*, Nov. 30, 1918.

There is a sharp difference of opinion as to the moral effect of prophylaxis as administered in the army. The official and authoritative position was entirely admirable. It approached the subject primarily from the medical viewpoint, but it was emphatically against illicit sexual relations, upheld the possibility and healthfulness of continence and interpreted the early preventive treatment, not as a protection of the individual from the consequences of his own guilt, but as a protection of the community. But in the administration of treatment and the giving out of instruction the army had to work through officers and doctors whose personal convictions and lives were not always in accord with the official position. At best, prophylaxis involves delicate moral problems. Its systematic administration acknowledges "the customariness of the breach of custom involved; the psychological step from this to an appearance of official sanction is a short one."<sup>61</sup> It readily becomes an admission of the situation and a mere cynical avoidance of personal risks. It is the difference in the attitudes of officers and doctors that probably accounts largely for the conflicting impressions resulting.

"The army itself, acting under orders, has held up a higher moral standard than ever before in history. It has taught in every way it could that the prevention of the consequences of impurity, the cure of the disease contracted, is not the first barrier it would raise, but the last and most desperate; the barrier not for the strong man and efficient soldier, but for the weakling who must be saved, if possible in spite even of himself and his weakness."

"Military methods in dealing with venereal disease will have had, I believe, an effect good rather than bad."

"The treatment of venereal diseases tends to make the soldier consider them from a physical point of view."

"The army's attitude is simply to safeguard the men from the physical consequences of sin, and sometimes I fear the men get the idea that when they have escaped

<sup>61</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Morale and Its Enemies."



the consequences they have done all that is to be required of them."

"For a fellow to be clean means something very different today than it used to. It doesn't mean that he is pure sexually but that he hasn't contracted some disease."

"The example of officers is bad. Medical officers have presented the moral question as required by the army but have said they didn't live up to it, and have suggested that men do as they please, so long as they didn't get caught."

"It has been noted that where officers, non-commissioned as well as commissioned, have a sense of responsibility for the moral, not less than the military character of their men, a clean command is the result."<sup>62</sup>

"There is a great difference in the way prophylaxis is administered, and its use or abuse, its good or harm, may be governed thereby. In some stations, the treatment was given in a joking way, with little or no attempt at privacy. Some men would be shamed out of taking the treatment, and thereby, in perhaps their first exposure, run great danger of infection. Others would have all their sense of modesty broken down, and become utterly shameless. In my own regiment, we were lucky enough to have a surgeon with the good sense to insist on having prophylactic treatment administered with the utmost privacy. The patient was always taken into a separate room, with no one present except the man who administered the dose."

The effect of the looser standards of sexual morality in France upon the minds of the American men who have been overseas we cannot now determine. That there is the possibility of lowered social ideals is clear.

"The standard of home life that they have seen over here is not American, and with its peculiar freedom and subtle charm, not a few are ready, at least for a time, to accept it. . . . The social sin is to many not a sin but a natural gratification of desire, falsely condemned at home. This I have heard asserted again and again. 'The false standards of the people of America need to be corrected,' they say, 'or at least modified, and the real truth taught.'" (A private; formerly a teacher of psychology.)

<sup>62</sup> Chaplain Brent's Report to the Adjutant General.

On the other hand there are many who recognize the problem with equal clearness but who feel that the contact with lower standards will tend to make the men more appreciative of, and more loyal to, the higher ideals that are held before them at home.

#### PETTY STEALING

This was one of the special developments of army life, especially overseas. It appears to have been common from "stores" and to a less extent from fellow-soldiers. There is a general agreement that its occurrence is not very significant. But it must be remarked that such stealing often indicated a lack of consideration for the comfort and needs of other men which make it distinctly a selfish "looking out for number one."

"This is not significant as stealing, but probably comes out of the strong community sense in the army. There is a lack of the sense of personal possession. Whatever is loose and one wants, one expects to take. Possibly it issued in the A. E. F. from the combat days when it was understood that everything was common property. It has continued with decreasing force since then."

"We have a new word for stealing in the army—namely, 'salvaging.' Men will salvage almost anything, and there is little regard for property rights. Perhaps there is reason for this in the fact that on his arrival in France the soldier was often compelled to turn in his barracks bag with all the personal property it contained; he was then sent to the front with the minimum of equipment. Now he feels, perhaps, he may get some of it back. Probably the point of view will disappear after demobilization."

Although the abnormal conditions of military life have created serious moral problems, men have had an opportunity in the army to learn by experience many of the moral lessons the Church is engaged in teaching. "The soldiers have been learning subordination of their individual desires to the good of the army. They have

been learning a very real lesson in a brotherhood which takes no account of property ownership or class distinction. They have learned how to do team work. They have learned intense loyalty to leadership. They have learned the satisfaction of binding their lives to a great purpose, and above all they have learned that the great enthusiasms of life are reserved for those who suffer in a great cause."

At any rate they have had a chance to learn these things and are better prepared to understand them.

## SUMMARY OF PART II

If it was difficult to make generalizations concerning the religious and moral life of the men as they came into the army from civilian life, it is even more difficult to generalize concerning the effect of the war and military training on the men. The conditions under which various sections of the army lived were so diverse that we must safeguard nearly all of our conclusions with the reminder that there were undoubtedly many groups to which the following summaries do not fully apply.

### I. The Effects on Personal Religion—Faith and Practice.

1. As to the total effect of military training and war on the personal religion of the men in the army we do not yet know. There is much evidence that there has been very little change. Yet many observers believe that the outcome has been conducive to religion, while many others are sure that there has been more loss than gain. Evidently there have been gains in some directions and losses in others, and we have to admit that we have no scale of values by which to weigh the net result. We have also to bear in mind that the religion of the trenches was largely "emergency religion," and that concerning its permanent significance we cannot yet decide.

2. It seems clear, however, that in all military areas, there were occasions that "made men think"—such occasions as enlistment, embarkation, actual advance to the front, or recuperation from wounds. Temporarily at least large numbers of men were made more serious and impressionable.

3. The effect of this heightening of interest in serious things was to lead many men whose religious life had been rather conventional before into a more active and conscious faith. There was also a considerable body of formal new decisions to lead better lives. But it cannot be said that there was any "mass movement" toward religion or any large accession to the ranks of definite Christianity. On the other hand, there is little concrete evidence of loss of religious faith, although a general dulling of sensibilities and lowering of standards as a result of combatant service is sometimes noted.

4. A more vivid sense of the need for, and the reality of, God came to many men at the front. They conceived Him mainly as Protector or Companion, with relatively little thought of Him as Judge or Saviour.

5. It also seems certain that there was much informal praying at the front. Most of it took the form of petitions for physical protection and sprang out of a new sense of dependence, but there were also other elements of need that found expression—need for moral courage, for forgiveness, and for the welfare of dear ones.

6. The problem of evil and of God's providence was accentuated by the war and was the main intellectual difficulty in the way of religious faith.

7. There was a decided renewal of interest in immortality and increased belief in it. There was, however, little moral or Christian content in the conception.

8. The soldier had experiences that made more intelligible to him certain Christian ideas, such as the meaning of the Cross. There is a danger, however, of the significance of the Cross of Christ being reduced in his thinking to the level of the ordinary suffering of ordinary men.

9. There was a great increase of Bible carrying, and probably a considerable increase in reading it. The results we have no way of determining.

10. One of the most commonly noted observations is the increased demand for "reality" on the part of men who have been face to face with the grim facts of war. By "reality in religion" they seem to mean mainly practical applicability to daily life.

## II. The Effects on the Churches and Churchmanship.

1. The situation in the army encouraged and developed the indifference to denominational lines already noted in Part I. The principle of unity, however, was primarily comradeship in arms rather than comradeship in faith. The remarkable cooperation and fellowship among the chaplains, even in baptism and in the Communion, is the most significant factor in the direction of church unity. It is probable also that among laymen, in spite of their general tendency to accept denominational divisions and to attach little significance to them, the definite experience of a cooperative ministry and the recognition of the validity of "orders" and "sacraments" of other church bodies than their own will have some significance for civilian life.

2. There was a general interruption of habits of public and private worship and a widespread disregard of Sunday—perhaps, however, not extended long enough to have serious effect on men with settled religious habits. On the other hand it is probable that many men were brought into touch with church services in the army for the first time in a long period.

3. Public worship in the army has led to an appreciation of the importance of simplicity, directness and intensity in services. There is also a considerable tendency among ministers who were in the army to attach larger value to the Communion.

4. The importance of the ministry of helpful service to the practical needs of men, the ministry to the sick,

and the care of the dead, received new emphasis in the army.

### III. The Effects on Moral Life and Standards.

1. The effects of the war on moral life have been so diverse and depend so largely on local conditions that the definite conclusions that can be reached are very few. Army discipline seems to have been beneficial to many, at least temporarily, yet to others it has probably been harmful, destroying initiative and creating a merely legalistic view of obedience. So far as the present evidence goes men do not generally seem to have been "brutalized" by warfare; possibly the high motives of the men offset this tendency.

2. The greatest single factor in affecting moral standards was probably the corporate character of army life. There was a heightening of group morality—of regard for the common good.

3. Gambling, profanity, and petty stealing decidedly increased, a result due largely to the abnormal conditions of military life.

4. The circumstances of war were mainly demoralizing to sexual morality. But in many of the large home camps the educational and recreational programs and the repressive measures used by the Government resulted in a better situation than is found in many civilian communities. On the other hand, in certain areas in France there was unquestionably serious loss, as conditions were far less favorable and government jurisdiction over the neighborhood was not possible.

5. There is a sharp difference of opinion as to the moral effect of prophylaxis. The official position of the Government, while approaching the subject from the medical viewpoint, upheld continence as the ideal and interpreted prophylaxis as a protection of the community rather than as giving to the offender immunity from con-

sequences of sin. But the men who were responsible for carrying out the Government's policy often lost sight of this point of view and the fact of prophylaxis was itself sometimes interpreted as official sanction of immorality.



PART III  
LESSONS FOR THE CHURCH



## CHAPTER VIII

### WHAT THE CHURCH MAY LEARN FROM THE ARMY

It is the purpose of Part III of this report to gather up briefly the lessons for the Church that stand out clearly from the foregoing consideration of religion in the army. To treat them fully would be to enter into a complete discussion of the nature and function of the Church—which is neither possible in this report nor within its scope. Various aspects of the Church's duty in the light of the war experience are treated in other reports and pamphlets, issued or to be issued by this Committee. We include here only such conclusions as seem to us to follow directly from the facts evident in the army or the influences felt there.

Detailed applications of the lessons here pointed out are not possible without entering into local and denominational conditions. It is clearly beyond the scope of such an interdenominational group as the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook to make such applications. The following discussion, therefore, is confined to suggestions as to general lines along which we believe thought and action should move. Only the various church organizations and local pastors can give practical effectiveness to what is here suggested.

#### I. CONCERNING CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*The great body of inactive church members and persons whose allegiance to the Church is only nominal calls for a candid reexamination of the meaning of church*

*membership and of the actual workings of the various methods of admission into the Christian Church.*

Part of the price which Christianity pays for being "generally accepted" is the blurring of the line between Christian and non-Christian, church member or non-church member. "Being a Christian" and "belonging to the Church" become matters of inheritance, like nationality. The evidence furnished by the army has shown how great that "blurring" is. Men hardly know where they stand. The convictions or way of life of men are frequently no indication of their official relation to the Christian Society. Men within the Church and men outside it have little conception of the obligations involved in membership.<sup>1</sup>

We recognize the great difficulty in drawing a sharp line between what constitutes a Christian view of life and what does not, or in saying how good a man must be to be a Christian. And we realize that men will inevitably differ as to the extent to which the Church should be regarded primarily as a fellowship of men and women who have attained to a certain way of living and the extent to which it should be thought of simply as a training-school for all who are sufficiently interested in religion to care to become associated with the organized expression of it. But in spite of these difficulties it should be possible for the several Churches to make their membership more significant and vital. It is clear that there is at the present time great laxness in the admission of new members and in the instruction of those admitted, and serious leakage from the existing membership. There is no evidence that this situation is peculiar to any denomination, or that it is the accompaniment of any system such as infant baptism, confirmation or profes-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Report on the Chaplains' Replies to the Lord Bishop of Kensington: "We have been admitting multitudes into the Fellowship of the Church, and we have not succeeded in providing that out of the Body should be found those who would make the Fellowship a reality for those brought into it."

sion of faith. It appears that all the Churches are busily engaged in creating nominal members.

## II. CONCERNING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

*The widespread ignorance of the meaning of Christianity and of church membership demands a greatly increased emphasis on the teaching office of the Church.*

The testimony that we have received goes to show that if a vote were taken among chaplains and other religious workers as to the most serious failure of the Church, as evidenced in the army, a large majority would agree that it was the Church's failure as a teacher. We have not succeeded in teaching Christianity to our own members, let alone distributing a clear knowledge of it through the community at large.<sup>2</sup> If we learn our lesson the result will be a vastly greater emphasis on our teaching function. In comparison with other tasks it must have more thought, more energy, more financial support both in the local church and in the denomination. It is furthermore a task that challenges us to the most effective interdenominational cooperation that can be achieved.

But while the fact that Christianity is so misunderstood is cause for the most careful consideration of the teaching function of the Church, it is also—strange as the remark may seem—a great ground for hope. For does it not mean that if only men did understand how deep and vital the Christian faith really is they would embrace it? If the rank and file of men were deliberately anti-Christian we might well despair. If they are indif-

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. the conclusion, based on entirely different evidence from ours, reached by the British interdenominational committee in its report on "The Army and Religion": "That probably four-fifths of the young manhood of our country should have little or no vital connection with any of the Churches, and that behind this detachment there should lie so deep a misunderstanding of the faiths by which Christian men and women live, and the ideals of life which they hold, is, perhaps, the most salient factor of our evidence. Here is an alarming fact, which is, surely, clear proof that something somewhere has gone gravely wrong, and that the hour has come when we must discover the hidden causes of the evil and do what may be done to set things right."

The Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada and the Anglican Report on the Chaplains' Replies to the Lord Bishop of Kensington also emphasize "the fact of a very widespread ignorance about even the simplest truths of Christianity."

ferent to the Church through ignorance and misunderstanding we may surely hope that more effective teaching will remove the causes of the indifference and win for the Church the young manhood in which, as we have seen, there are such fine qualities on which to build.

1. *The revelation of the large degree of failure in our religious education challenges us to a far more serious attention to the Sunday school and a candid examination of its curriculum, methods of teaching and organization.*

It is upon the Sunday school that the Protestant churches have mainly depended for any systematic religious education of the children and youth. It is found in practically every church in every community. Yet the ignorance of young men as to the vital meaning of Christianity, so clearly disclosed in the cross section of youth that we had in the army, is an indication that the Sunday school must have been seriously ineffective in its work.

It is not here possible to point out in detail the causes of this failure in the Sunday school. Probably the chief factor is the inadequate time at its disposal, the necessity of crowding the entire program of worship, instruction and handwork into a single hour. The inadequate training of teachers, the lack of proper courses adapted to various ages or needs, the neglect to provide sufficient opportunity for self-expression in service—these and other points might be noted. What we particularly desire to emphasize, however, is that we must regard the Sunday school with vastly more seriousness and give to it an attention that is consonant with the great opportunity it presents for training in Christian living.

It also seems important to urge upon all Christian workers a more thorough consideration of the definite purposes which the Sunday school should aim to achieve. Too often its function seems to be exhausted in simply teaching Bible stories, securing the memorization of Bible

passages and keeping children "interested" and off the street. We need to realize more clearly that the Sunday school exists fundamentally to teach the meaning of the Christian religion and to train in the Christian way of living. Chaplains criticize our religious education on the basis of its results, for its vagueness and failure to connect with the real business of living. Men have religious ideas, but these ideas have not sufficient definition or clarity to give men stability or an assurance of knowing where they stand. It appears to be quite possible for one to go to Sunday school and church considerably without ever gaining a clear conception of what Christianity is. And in the case of great numbers the Christian view of life not only fails to control action but has the air of being something that is perhaps vaguely true but inapplicable. Our religious education must be more definite and more vitally connected with the positive Christian duties and the Christian way of life.

2. *Training in intelligent habits of private and public worship should be greatly stressed.*

The army experience has been a tremendous demonstration of the power of routine in carrying men over the periods when impulse is exhausted and interest is at low ebb, and in giving the individual the stimulus and support of group action. At the same time it has exerted a great strain on the routine of religion, on the habitual practices of private and public worship. The evidence is that very few Christians within Protestantism have deeply grooved and intelligent religious habits. Neither public worship nor private prayer is the regular practice of a large number. To teach the use of these habits, guide their development and give them the strength that comes from use should be one of the principal efforts in religious education.

We find ourselves in hearty agreement with the statement of the Archbishops' First Committee of Inquiry:

"A Sunday school which makes no systematic provision for training in worship is seriously defective and the deficiency should receive the most earnest consideration in view not only of the general principle but of the conditions of the day."

3. *Two false conceptions of Christianity should be openly and convincingly combated—that it is a selfish thing and that it is a negative thing.*

The best way to combat these current criticisms of Christianity as taught by the Church is to see to it that the Christian life as we teach it consists in neither of these things, but in positive love and active good will. There is a place for the negatives, the "Thou shalt nots" as restrictions placed on the man who would gain a positive ideal. But if by our use of the Ten Commandments or of more modern prohibitions we are training men to look upon these as the primary or characteristic element in Christian ethics, we are justifying the criticism. Similarly there is self-interest—not selfish interest—in the Christian motive. He who would find his life must lose it, but the promise is that he shall find it. That is quite different from making the Christian goal individual future safety or selfish inner peace.

4. *A Christian interpretation of sex life must be a regular part of all Christian education.*

Whatever the percentage, it is agreed that sexual immorality represents the gravest problem in personal morality presented in the army. There has been a great advance in physical and medical education on this subject. There should be a corresponding effort on the part of the Church to give its membership a Christian interpretation of sex life. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is not enough. Only an interpretation of sex life as the physical expression of spiritual love and as a divine creative power will lift it to a Christian level and give men



positive motives for self-control. But this cannot be accomplished if we postpone all serious attention to the problem until the age of young manhood is reached. Education in the Christian ideals of sexual relationships, wisely adapted to the developing life of the individual, must become an integral part of the whole process of religious education.

5. *The religious instruction and training given in the home outlives all other religious education. In directing or controlling that influence lies our greatest opportunity.*

"The faith they have came from home for the most part and generally from a good mother who taught them." The parish minister discovered long ago that the idealism and religious interest of parents is at its height in their thought of their children. The minister in the service has been impressed again and again with the fact that the idealism and faith of men so often center in their home and especially in the mother.<sup>3</sup> It is in the relationship of parent and child that by far the greatest opportunity for religious instruction and training lies.

But with the development of specialized agencies of religious education there seems to have come a lessening of definite or systematic education of children in the home. The Church needs to provide courses of study for parents, plans for family worship, suggestions as to the cultivation of right attitudes towards others, and in other ways to stimulate and guide and help parents in the religious education of children. If we can center attention on the primary obligation of the home in religious training we shall be doing the most effective thing possible in the development of Christians. The renewing of the religious life and spiritual atmosphere of the home

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. the statement in the British Report on "The Army and Religion": "Nothing impresses those who have worked among our men more than their deep and passionate love of home. It is abundantly clear that of all the vital influences moulding their characters for good, none is today like this in its refining and humanising power. It is in fact the key of the whole spiritual situation."

is at the root of our task. If we fail here we shall fail everywhere.

### III. CONCERNING FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS

*The fundamental doctrines of the Church need to be "revitalized"—taught in such a way that they shall appear as real explanations of the meaning of life and the answer to men's practical needs.*

The evidence presented in this report has shown clearly that great numbers of men think of the doctrines of the Church as something perhaps vaguely true but abstract and formal, remote from their real problems and their daily needs. This being the case, it is no wonder that there is, as we have found, a general tendency to think that religion ought to be merely a matter of conduct and service—that "what you believe doesn't matter." We have to make it clear that it is just this lack of vital belief that matters terribly—make them see that genuine and definite faith in a Christian God, in immortality, in the Lordship and Saviourhood of Christ, in salvation from sin, in the coming of the Kingdom of God on the earth, is the very foundation of the noblest living and the highest service.

Since it has been emphasized again and again in this study that there is a widespread misunderstanding as to what Christianity really means, it is important here to inquire whether this misunderstanding is not due, in part at least, to our failure to present the fundamental Christian truths in a fresh and living way.

There are certain emphases that need particularly to be made in our teaching, in the light of what we have found in the army. The following paragraphs will consider some of them:

1. *The generally accepted beliefs in God and immortality need to be given a definitely Christian content and practical effectiveness.*

The present problem of the Church is not so much to create belief in God and immortality, at least intellectual assent, as to fill out and develop a belief that is general, and above all to make clear and emphatic the moral implications. Belief in a god is widely distributed. Living, effective faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is rare. Vague belief in a general Providence, somehow beneficent, is common. But of God as a positive Other Will whose purpose claims our wills and whose righteousness judges our disloyalty men know little. And in the case of immortality the same lack of moral content is apparent. The traditional imagery of heaven and hell has lost much of its former convincingness and with it has gone much of the sense of moral alternatives—of judgment to come.

2. *"The Kingdom of God" should be placed among the major ideas which the Church is seeking to implant and propagate.*

During recent years the Kingdom of God, conceived of as the rule of God on earth, has gained an increasingly prominent place in professional Christian thought. For many it has come to be the central idea in the Christian scheme. In view of this development it is interesting that in our army a very general ignorance of the term is indicated.<sup>4</sup> It should also be noted that it is the lack of any adequate conception of the social mission of Christianity that seems to underlie very largely the observation, so constantly reported, that the men do not understand the meaning of Christianity. This being the case there is serious danger of the idea of the Kingdom of God becoming professional and academic without living content in the minds of average Christians.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the conclusion of the British Report on "The Army and Religion": "One of the questions that we put under the head of 'Points of Contact' was, what do men think of the Kingdom of God? To this there has been practically no answer at all. The men of whom we are thinking do not seem to know anything about it. They do not seem to have any idea that Christianity has a gospel for all humanity and looks out upon the reign of God in human society."

3. *In view of the vagueness of impressions as to the life and character of Jesus Christ there is need for the most careful thought and most devoted effort to present Him in His fulness.*

It has been noted elsewhere in this report that in the replies of almost all of our correspondents there has been a strange lack of direct evidence as to what the men think of Christ. The almost inevitable conclusion is that the thought of the men is generally too vague to make it really possible to record it. And this inference is, in a general way, borne out by such evidence as we have received upon this point. It is reported that the men "respect Christ," or think of Him as "the best man that ever lived," but there is little testimony that leads us to believe that this general attitude of respect rests on any definite idea either of His way of living or the qualities of His character that make him the Lord of all good life and give Him recreative power in the lives of men.

Do we not here have our supreme opportunity to give to Christian teaching the note of "reality" which the soldier is reported to demand? If Christian faith seems vague and remote, inapplicable to the practical problems that men meet and impracticable in daily life, surely we need most of all to present the historical figure of Jesus Christ in all His fulness as the Son of Man, in whom the truths that we hold and the ideal to which we are committed are given objective reality by expression in human life.

4. *In view of the loss of meaning in the terminology of salvation we need a clearer presentation of the positive content of the doctrine and a thoughtful consideration of the real motives and interests and experiences to which we must appeal.*

If men are interested in what we mean by salvation and sin and atonement, they do not know them under these names. The common words and phrases that have in

the past expressed the great truths of the Gospel have lost vital meaning for many. We cannot save by correct phrases. We must rediscover for ourselves and express in very plain language what we do mean by salvation.<sup>5</sup> Is it future safety, or inner peace, or liberation from the control of evil desires, or the power to do good and be good, or the "new social order," or union with God?

The demand of the soldier for "reality" is a fair demand. It challenges us to express our theological conceptions in terms that are readily understood, in a way that makes clear that they are explanations of his own best experiences and convictions and that Christian truths have immediate application to the problems that he is facing every day. So far as traditional terminology or form of expression are foreign to our manner of thinking in the present day, the responsibility sharply confronts us to find terminology that is in keeping with modern knowledge and experience.

5. *We have in the experience of the soldiers, and in the knowledge of that experience among many others, an unusual point of contact and starting point for the interpretation of many great Christian ideas such as Sacrifice, Burden-Bearing, the Cross, Atonement, Brotherhood, Providence, Immortality, Dependence on God.*

"Hardly anything, I believe, will be more fateful for the religious history of the next generation than the success of the Church in expressing its own knowledge of religion, or of Christianity in particular, so that the returning soldier and others can recognize it as something of which their own experience has already spoken, whether or not it was known by that name."<sup>6</sup> From the very beginning the Church has found in the experiences

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the resolution adopted at the Conference of Australian chaplains in May, 1919: "In particular [this conference] considers that the seriousness of sin and the need of redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ require emphasizing but in order that those truths may be presented more effectively they should be delivered from their more or less traditional interpretations and applied to the actual life and thought of the present generation."

<sup>6</sup> W. E. Hocking, "Religion in War-Time," *Atlantic Monthly*.

of military life and war helpful analogies for the understanding of religion. They assuredly need to be used with restraint and without sentimentality if we are not to alienate men who have experienced the original. But they are a great common ground of understanding for this generation. Men who have discovered that they belong to their country are better prepared to understand that they belong to God. Men who have known complete obedience have an introduction to what God's will demands of man's will. The brotherhood and democracy of the ranks at its best is a fleeting experience of what the Church seeks in its own fellowship. Men have known the necessity by which the finest and fittest carry the burden of the disloyal and unfit. And they have been brought face to face in a new way with the ancient problems of Evil and Providence.

We need to realize, at the same time, that there are dangers in approaching Christianity through the experiences of war that we must guard against—perhaps even counteract—such as the identifying of religion with patriotism, the militarizing of Christ, the confusion of American democracy with the Kingdom of God.

#### IV. CONCERNING PUBLIC WORSHIP

*The fact that in spite of all the obstacles in the way of public worship in the army the instinct for it was still so unmistakable ought to give us a new appreciation of its ineradicable character in human life and lead us to new emphasis on its significance.*

The unanimity with which chaplains have testified to the response of men to dignified, quiet and reverent worship is remarkable. Overseas there were of course great difficulties in the way of holding services in an atmosphere conducive to worship. Barns, dug-outs or shell-torn fields often constituted the setting. There were also, as noted elsewhere in this report, constant distrac-

tions. Sunday was often the same as every other day. Yet in spite of all the difficulties the impulse to corporate worship was not destroyed. We have a new appreciation of its value whenever it is so conducted as to carry with it a note of genuineness and reality.

1. *The army experience has demonstrated both the great value of the short, simple, direct, 'hard-hitting' service, and also the wide appeal of the Communion.*

In the services at home there are other interests and tastes to be considered besides those of young men. But the services which particularly appealed to men in the army were in the main shorter, more simple, more informal, more direct than the customary services in our churches. The combining of entertainment and amusement with worship, however, which was so often carried out in the army, does not seem to have made a permanent appeal to the men who appreciated in any adequate degree the significance of worship.<sup>7</sup>

Side by side with this responsiveness to the simple and informal service is noted the appeal of the Communion service. The interest of men in it was at least sufficiently great to urge us to consider afresh whether within Protestantism that sacrament has not been too much neglected. Our experience with services in the army would seem to lead us to an appreciation of the need for elasticity in public worship, and perhaps also to something of a rapprochement between the liturgical and the spontaneous types.

2. *Certain criticisms of church services are prevalent—that they are unintelligible, artificial in tone, "unreal," feminine in atmosphere, too long, not heartily congregational.*

The charges made by soldiers against our church ser-

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. the statement in MacLean and Sclater's "God and the Soldier": "While we may easily attract the thoughtless by cheaper methods (provided the local picture house is not open), we shall alienate those who are the backbone of the nation, if we turn away from the dignity which should mark our approach to God."

vices are not war products, but they were more frankly expressed and more commonly heard in the army.<sup>8</sup> Soldiers were not hesitant in demanding that services be natural and thoroughly sincere, and not too long; that language be plain-spoken and clear; that the minister and choir shall not "do it all." A chaplain with a wide experience has recently written: "There is among the men a widespread resentment of sentimentality in worship and of 'the cult of the pretty-pretty.' . . . To put it in somewhat more philosophic terms than they use, it would seem that they condemn contemporary worship on two grounds: first, that it is vicarious; second, that it is introspective. . . . They miss the corporate note in devotion. Since they are healthy minded young things, they resent having their spiritual attention turned inward."<sup>9</sup>

3. *In preaching it is charged that Christian ministers are frequently uninteresting, antiquarian, artificial and tiresomely long. Self-examination is in order. The present emphasis on "reality" demands a special striving after importance, intelligibility, sincerity and contemporary application in preaching.*

The demands made upon our preaching are in large part those made upon our church services in general. The faults criticized are in the main the faults of something that has grown conventional and lost its vitality. That element in our regular worship which has been most free for the expression of new life seems to have grown old. We need to recall that there is nothing sacred in the customary length, form, terminology or tones of preaching. Even this institution is made for men. It

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the following statement in the Message of the Canadian Chaplains Overseas Military Forces to the Churches of Canada: "Men have grown impatient with the least suspicion of insincerity in our public devotions. They feel that many of our hymns and prayers do not really express their desires. The very phraseology is foreign to their thought and speech. They will not continue to repeat forms, no matter how ancient and sanctified they may be, if these are no longer a vehicle for the soul's true longing."

<sup>9</sup> B. I. Bell, "The Church and the Civilian Young Man," *Atlantic Monthly*.



must be judged by the extent to which it ministers to the practical religious needs of men.

Preachers need to give serious attention to these criticisms, not in order to be popular, but in order to reach the rank and file of men more effectively with our message. We must talk about things that matter, that make a difference, that honestly count in the religious life of average men and women. We must make sure we are making ourselves understood by simple-minded people. We must inwardly and transparently mean what we say by our words and our tones. And we must show clear contemporary application of the sermons which we preach to the lives that are now being lived. "Reality" as applied to preaching means that the tones of the preacher shall express his real feelings, that the things he preaches about shall represent his fresh experience and conviction, that the interests to which he appeals are real interests of his hearers, that the things he emphasizes as important shall be really important. On all of these points chaplains tell us that young men are severe judges.

## V. CONCERNING MORAL LIFE AND STANDARDS

1. *The virtues and vices practiced, admired or tolerated by men generally indicate what we have to build upon, avoid and overcome in the presentation and development of Christian character.*

In seeking to develop the virtues of courage, generosity, unselfishness, persistent cheerfulness, straightforwardness, humility, loyalty, devotion to home, we have the advantage of an existing admiration for these qualities. The problem is not to create them or the love of them, but to bring out their implications more completely and show that the natural or military virtues are fulfilled in Christ, and that He is indeed the "Lord of All Good Life." That men have shown many of these virtues in war should not blind us to the fact that the same men are

frequently lax in the matter of sexual morality, drink, gamble, and lack in a persistent will to serve the community for which they have fought. Perhaps the most effective way to attack these vices is to indicate their conflict with the virtues that men admire. The vices most to be feared in ourselves, as being most sure to repel men from the cause we represent, are cowardice, close-fistedness, gloominess, snobbishness, swelled-headedness, hypocrisy.

2. *It is especially important in the presentation of Christian character and in our lives as Christians to avoid a one-sided ethic—whereby the morality of self-control and abstinence overshadows the morality of the good neighbor.*

We would all agree that in Christianity the law of love and neighborliness is primary and characteristic. We must not permit men, self-controlled and above reproach in matters of personal habits, sex, temperance, language, etc., and at the same time, hard, censorious, close, selfish, proud in their relations with their fellows, to represent the Christian ideal. We must make it clear both in example and precept that Christianity means an active life of love and good will and brotherhood.

3. *One of the largest factors in alienating men from the Church or in winning them to it is the lives of church members.*

It is probably true that it is not so much the Church itself that is criticized as members of the Church. "It seems to many men, and those the most worth while, that the moral standards of church people are too low. . . . Christians do not strike them as conspicuously more kind, more charitable, more loving, and more sacrificing than other men and women,—particularly more sacrificing."<sup>10</sup> It has been said of the early Christians

<sup>10</sup> B. I. Bell, "The Church and the Civilian Young Man," *Atlantic Monthly*.

that they "outlived the pagan," "outdied" him, and "out-thought" him. We must "outlive" the majority. That is the best evangelism.

4. *The army experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of vice suppression rather than vice regulation, and shown the possibilities when the problem is attacked in earnest.*

On the basis of the war experience in successful vice suppression the Church has the strongest grounds for co-operating vigorously with all who are attacking directly and unrelentingly commercial prostitution. The policy of the Government in dealing with prostitution, as is well known, was not regulation but suppression. "White zones" were created around the training camps in this country and vigorous measures were taken to secure the strict enforcement of the law. In the majority of communities this was done with marked success. The experience of the country during the war has shown the possibilities of the suppression of vice when the problem is undertaken honestly and energetically.

On May 7, 1918, General Pershing wrote to Lord Milner as follows: "I have heard with great satisfaction of the recent decision of the British war office that the licensed houses of prostitution are to be put out of bounds in the British Expeditionary Force. Many of us who have experimented with licensed prostitution or kindred measures, hoping thereby to minimize the physical evils, have been forced to the conclusion that they are really ineffective. Abraham Flexner has argued the case so convincingly that on the scientific side it seems to me there is no escape from the conclusion that what he terms 'abolition' as distinguished from 'regulation' is the only effective mode of combating this age-long evil."<sup>11</sup> With such testimony Christians may attack this problem with greater assurance.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Raymond Fosdick, "The Fight Against Venereal Disease," *The New Republic*.

5. *Any move towards the extension of prophylaxis—or early preventive treatment, before the development of disease—to civilian communities should be examined with great care. The Church cannot give its support to such a proposal. The emphasis must be upon measures to prevent immorality rather than to prevent disease.*

As a result of the great success of prophylaxis in reducing venereal disease in the army it has already been suggested that this method of attack should be extended to civilian communities. It is very important for the Church to understand what is involved.

There are at least three distinct medical policies possible in attacking venereal disease.

There is first of all the possibility of giving medical prophylaxis in package form to the man who is going to the brothel. Very few would now advocate such a policy. From a medical standpoint it is dubious because self-treatment is liable to be careless. From the moral standpoint most would agree that "the sale of indulgences for future sins was no worse than the selling or giving of prophylaxis beforehand." This was not the practice in the American army.

The policy in the army was that of compulsory early preventive treatment after exposure. Even under army conditions this practice was far from satisfactory from a medical point of view. In spite of the vigilance of medical authorities, soldiers were often careless or wholly violated the rules. And the moral risks were more serious. Its effect may well be coarsening and cynical unless the administration is carefully guarded. It must be administered in privacy by high-minded men. And patients must "be given to understand that prophylaxis is not intended to give immunity to fornicators and adulterers in their uncleanness, but to protect innocent men and women against awful contamination and disease."<sup>12</sup> Any extension of this procedure to civilian com-

<sup>12</sup> Chaplain Brent's Report to the Adjutant General of the U. S. A.

munities would involve additional difficulties. The army was a one-sex community where frequent compulsory medical examination was possible. And men were required to give full facts as to the source and place of exposure for use in law enforcement. In civilian communities compulsory prophylaxis would of course be out of the question. The voluntary cooperation of the patients would be necessary. And it would be hardly possible to expect prostitutes to report for treatment if the information gained were to be used in law enforcement. A system of compulsory early prophylaxis, to be successful, might become a new experiment in the recognition and regulation of vice, against which we ought to have turned our backs once for all.

A third policy is the provision of ample clinical facilities for the treatment of those who develop venereal disease, innocently or guiltily. Such a step the Church can certainly heartily support.

The Church needs to recognize clearly that the emphasis must be, not on prophylaxis to prevent disease, but upon a program to prevent immorality. The proposal for civilian prophylaxis as the *important* factor in social hygiene should be vigorously opposed. The *emphasis* must be placed on the enforcement of laws, sound education, adequate recreation, with provision for the wholesome association of the sexes, and, above all, on the moral issue involved.<sup>13</sup>

6. *The renewed evidence of the prevalence of venereal disease demands a reconsideration of the Church's attitude towards the marriage of any who cannot secure a medical certificate of freedom from venereal disease.*

We believe that the Churches in America should give earnest thought to the following conclusion to which the

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<sup>13</sup> For information concerning the modern program of attack upon venereal disease through law enforcement, education and adequate recreation, consult the American Social Hygiene Association, 105 West 40th Street, New York.

war experience has led a prominent British chaplain,<sup>14</sup> "that the Church of England should take the lead by refusing to 'solemnize' syphilitic marriages;<sup>15</sup> that this is no real hardship or injustice on any man; that a man who rates God's blessing through the Church on his married life sufficiently high will consider it well worth the inconvenience of troubling to obtain a doctor's certificate for a clean bill of health; that even if he is not pronounced fit he can avail himself of the means provided to effect a cure—a step which otherwise a false and selfish modesty might have prevented him from taking; that there can be no blessing of God on a tainted union, for, whether or not either of the parties is guiltily responsible for the taint, it is one that may affect the children yet unborn, and therefore the marriage at that time is not such as to win God's approval; that the Church in so insisting would be taking a perfectly reasonable and legitimate course in removing the mockery of many 'Christian marriages' of today; that a marriage in Church is meant to be and should be a sincere act of prayer—by people who believe in God—for His blessing on them at the time of the most important change of their whole lives; that people to whom these conditions for any reasons do not apply should only be thankful that the Church at last does not allow them to make humbugs of themselves, even for an hour, nor a mockery of a religion in which they do not believe, and that they should seek legal union elsewhere; finally that it is no wild prophecy to say that eventually the State will insist on a clean bill of health in those who propose to beget children, and that those who love their Church would like to see her take the lead in this instead of being compelled years hence to adopt a Christian principle from a secular authority for purely material reasons."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> T. W. Pym, "Papers from Picardy."

<sup>15</sup> Gonorrhea as well as syphilis ought no doubt to be included in any adequate consideration of the subject.

<sup>16</sup> It is worthy of note that a conference of Australian Chaplains on May 1 and 2, 1919, adopted, among other resolutions, a recommendation that

## VI. CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

1. *The small number of real Christians and active Church members and the general ignorance as to what Christianity is shows the great need for a renewed effort to present Christianity to the unchurched majority in an intelligible, appealing, insistent way.*

In an age of propaganda it does not appear that we Christians have succeeded in bringing our faith or our program before people generally. We have been too satisfied with ministering to the religious life of our own immediate constituency and have had too little sense of responsibility for the whole community. Numerous agencies are now succeeding in bringing their principles and objectives and appeals to the attention of the general public. The public may not fully respond, but they are at least aware of a continuous pressure, and know what they are rejecting or being indifferent to. The Church both in its larger and in its local expressions, should be sufficiently devoted and inventive to find means of presenting the challenge of Christianity to the semi-Christian majority. We have not begun to do our part until men generally know what they are rejecting or being indifferent to in remaining apart from positive Christianity. They must be made to feel the pressure of a continuous, intelligent, consecrated propaganda.

What we are urging is a "missionary" spirit and a "missionary" undertaking in the largest sense of the term. We need a deeper conviction that we have a Gospel that is absolutely indispensable to human life and that we cannot be satisfied till we have given our fullest energy and best resources of both personality and material means to bring that Gospel effectively to the hearts of all. And the testimony of the chaplains gives us new assurance of the responsiveness of large numbers of men now on

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"a medical certificate of freedom from hereditary disease be required of those about to marry."

the fringes of organized religion to the fundamental Christian truths when presented in a way that really shows their practical applicability to daily life.

*2. The experience of fellowship in the army has shown the possibility of it and increased the demand for it. The Church fails to be more effective in promoting brotherhood and democratic fellowship in the community because of the lack of these qualities in the Church itself.*

It has been noted in the first section of this report that there is a common criticism of the Church not only because it fails to do anything effective to remove social injustices and to secure a more Christian social order, but also because there is not in the Church itself a spirit of genuine brotherhood and democratic fellowship. That there is some basis for the criticism cannot be denied. The proclamation of a gospel of brotherhood to the world is evidently effective in just about the degree to which such a way of life prevails in the Church that proclaims it. It is also clear that the experience of fellowship in the army showed men the possibility of it, gave them a "taste" for it, and increased the demand that there be more of it in civilian life.

We heartily agree with our fellow-Christians in England that "the Church ought to be distinguished from the world by the type of common life into which her members are drawn, a life of simplicity and self-discipline, of practical fellowship and brotherhood, in which the joyous and affectionate atmosphere of a Christian family is extended to the congregation worshipping at a common altar, and beyond that, to the whole body of the Church. This must be her challenge to the present social order—no mere denunciation of wrong, but the exhibition, in the communities of men and women worshipping in her churches, of the power of Christianity to establish a new earthly relationship reflecting a spiritual unity which



transcends all social distinction of class or wealth. Through such a divine esprit de corps she will convince the world of the presence of Christ in His Church and will rebuke by life as well as by word the social injustices unworthy of a Christian nation."<sup>17</sup>

3. *The experience of the chaplains and of the Y. M. C. A. in practical ministries suggests at least the possibility of a wider ministry to the community. The great value of a ministry to all the sick, for example, was abundantly demonstrated.*

Most of the ministers in service undoubtedly gave more attention to practical ministry to the felt needs of men—physical, social and mental, as well as directly spiritual—than they had done in civilian life. The circumstances, of course, demanded it, since the ordinary provisions of home and school and recreation were not at hand. In the personal contacts resulting from this practical ministry many found great opportunities for reaching the souls of men most effectively. We do not venture to suggest to what extent such practical ministries should be continued by the Churches in the various home communities where conditions are very different from those which obtained in the army. We do, however, think it needful to ask whether there are not important human needs which the churches in some communities may be expected to meet and which would afford fine contacts for spiritual work with men.

A particular field in which the chaplains demonstrated the great value of their practical ministry in the army was the hospital. Here the chaplains devoted themselves, not to the sick of their own faith alone, but to all. The Churches may well consider the possibility of extending such a ministry more widely in civilian communities.

In the army all the sick of the community were to be found in the public wards of central hospitals. That

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<sup>17</sup> Archbishops' Third Committee of Inquiry.

made the systematic ministry to all the sick a much simpler matter than in civil life. In many cases the men were out of reach of any family care or attention, which made the ministry of the chaplains especially imperative and appreciated, but in spite of these differences it seems quite possible that the Churches by cooperative effort could bring a practical and spiritual ministry to the sick of civilian communities much more widely than is now attempted.

## VII. CONCERNING CHURCH UNITY

*One of the outstanding lessons of the war is the possibility of, and the widespread desire for, a greater degree of practical unity and cooperation among the Churches.*

An overwhelming majority of the chaplains with whom this Committee has come into touch declare that one of the impressions made most keenly upon their minds is the need for unity in the Churches. The conditions under which they worked made practical cooperation on their part an imperative necessity. They are convinced that a continuation of this cooperative relationship is both practicable and needed in a larger degree than has obtained in civilian life. They have no ready-made scheme for bringing this about, but they do insist that the problem must be tackled with more earnestness and energy than has yet been given to it. They are convinced that in the war we found ourselves possessing more practical unity than we had supposed, and that we must not let this vision of our unity grow dim.

1. *We have learned in the army how indifferent many laymen within the Churches and many earnest men just outside are to our denominational differences.*

The personality and approach of the minister is a vastly greater factor in his appeal or authority than the source of his ordination, as far as most men within or

without the Church are concerned. Most laymen are not able to see why sacraments as administered in a certain way or by a certain order of ministers are more valid than the same sacraments otherwise administered. They may have preferences as to form, and a certain feeling of family pride in the Church they belong to. But the question of validity is not intelligible to many. Similarly our credal distinctions are not vital to the majority. That a majority should feel this way does not of course prove that the majority is right, but it does prove that our divisions and exclusions far outrun any living differences between our constituencies.

*2. An important factor in promoting fellowship among the chaplains in the army was their frequent conferences for discussion of their common task. Similar conferences among Christian workers from the various Churches would be equally desirable in normal times and conducive to a spirit of unity.*

The secret of the fellowship among the chaplains during the war was to be found in the common task in which they were engaged. The oneness of their work was more clear when they were comrades in arms in a single army than when they were detached from one another in civilian life, each pursuing his own work with very little knowledge of what others were undertaking to do. Not only in the training schools for chaplains but also in many of the large camps, were there frequent conferences concerning their work and the methods by which the task, too large for all of them together, could be most efficiently carried out. A parallel to these conferences was found among the Churches at home in the General War-Time Commission, in which representatives of the war commissions of more than a score of bodies came together every two weeks during the war to consider their common task and to make their plans in consultation with one another.

We believe that one of the reasons why there is not a larger degree of cooperation among the Churches at home is because Christians of the various denominational bodies do not more often meet together, around the table, to share with one another their experiences, to take counsel together concerning common problems, and to receive the inspiration of united undertakings. Can we not learn from our experience in the war to lay hold of the benefits that can come from more frequent and systematic conference together?<sup>18</sup>

3. *Can the Churches show cause before God and public opinion why the cooperation and mutual recognition which characterized the ministry in the army is not practicable and desirable out of the army?*

In the army we have in the main :

a. "Allowed men of all denominations to come to our communions, taking their desire to communicate as a sufficient reason for receiving them."

b. United freely in common worship, wherein the ministers and people of many denominations joined together.

c. Cooperated fully in practical service, in religious ministries to the sick, and in the generous sharing of plans and assignment of responsibilities.

Shall we now undertake to prove to the men of our own constituencies that the ministrations which they received in faith from ministers of other denominations were not only irregular but invalid, that the Christian comrades with whom they joined in worship were not complete brothers in Christ because they had not received valid baptism or confirmation or were not joint inheritors of the true faith, that the cooperation of the chaplains

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. the resolution on "Christian Unity" adopted by a group of British chaplains at a conference in France, March 12-14, 1919: "In our opinion, great and mutual benefits would result from the holding of joint conferences, conventions and retreats, by members of our several churches as a regular and normal part of the life of those churches."

in the army is not desirable among churches at home? Shall we not rather go forward, in the unity of the Spirit of Christ, into an ever increasing cooperation and more effective achievement of our common task?













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